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THE NEW YORKER

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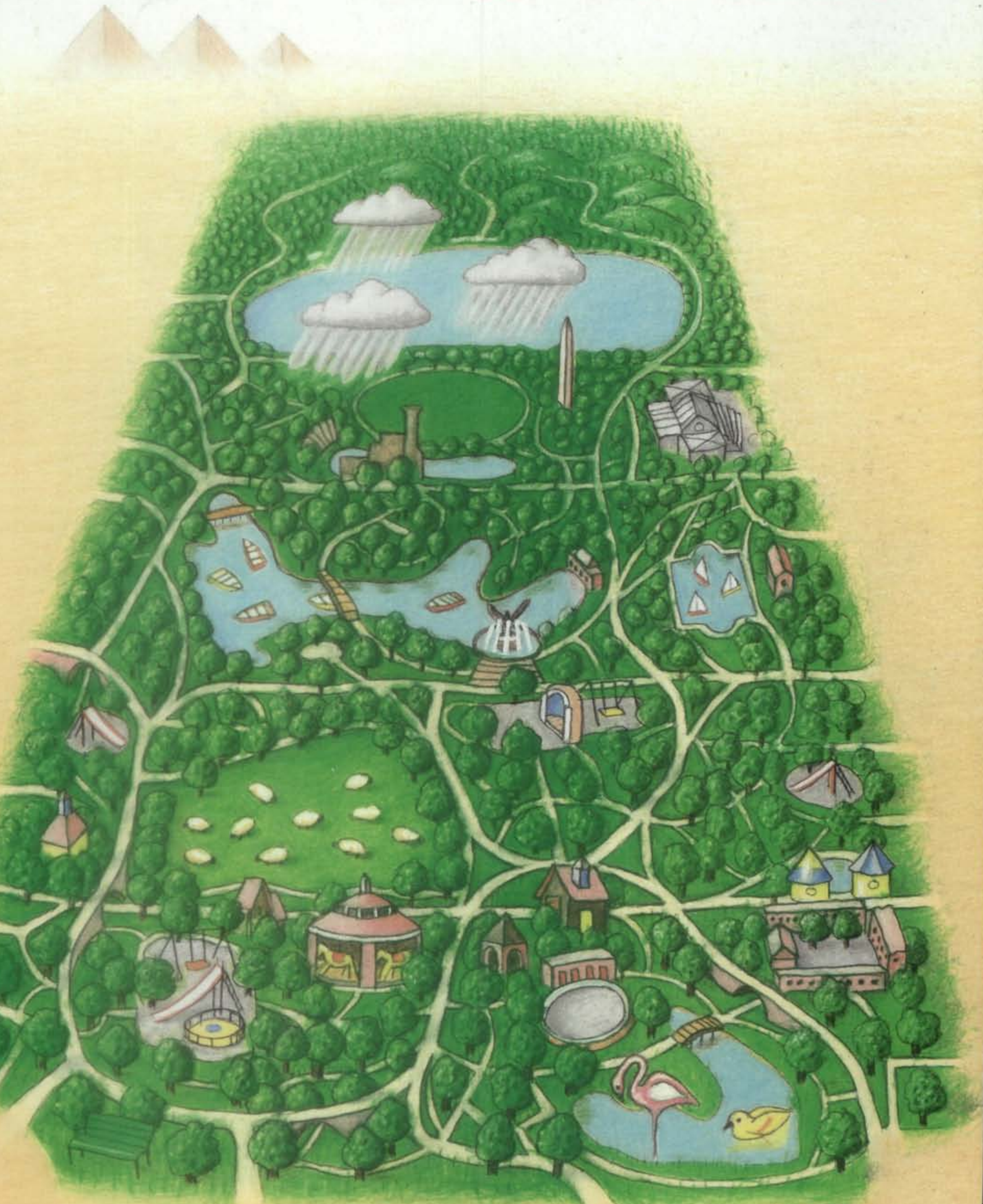

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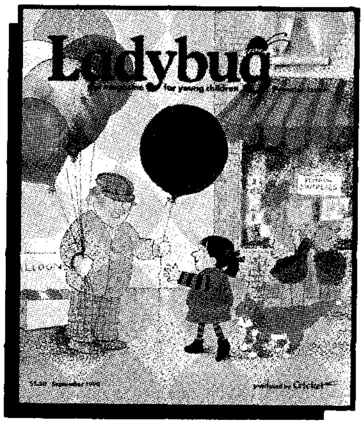

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

JUNE 25, 1990

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 4
THE TALK OF THE TOWN 23
"COLD HEART" . . . . *Jamaica Kincaid* 28
"PENTIMENTO" (POEM) . . . . *Liz Rosenberg* 32
"FIRST ASTHMA" (POEM) . . . . *Mark Rudman* 36
A REPORTER AT LARGE (POLITICS IN THE SOVIET UNION) . . . . *David K. Shipler* 42
"OUTSIDE PERPIGNAN IN HEAVY RAIN" (POEM) . . . . *Nicholas Christopher* 58
THE THEATRE . . . . *Edith Oliver, Mimi Kramer* 71
LETTER FROM BEIJING . . . . *Fred C. Shapiro* 73
IN FASHION . . . . *Holly Brubach* 76
A CRITIC AT LARGE ("THE RULES OF THE GAME") . . . . *Terrence Rafferty* 80

COVER: *Bob Knox*

DRAWINGS: *Warren Miller, Robert Weber, Roz Chast, Mick Stevens, Peter Steiner, Victoria Roberts, Charles Barsotti, Al Ross, Henry Martin, Joseph Mirachi, Michael Crawford, Mike Twohy, Michael Maslin, William Hamilton, William Steig, Bernard Schoenbaum, Tom Cheney, Donald Reilly, Richard Cline*

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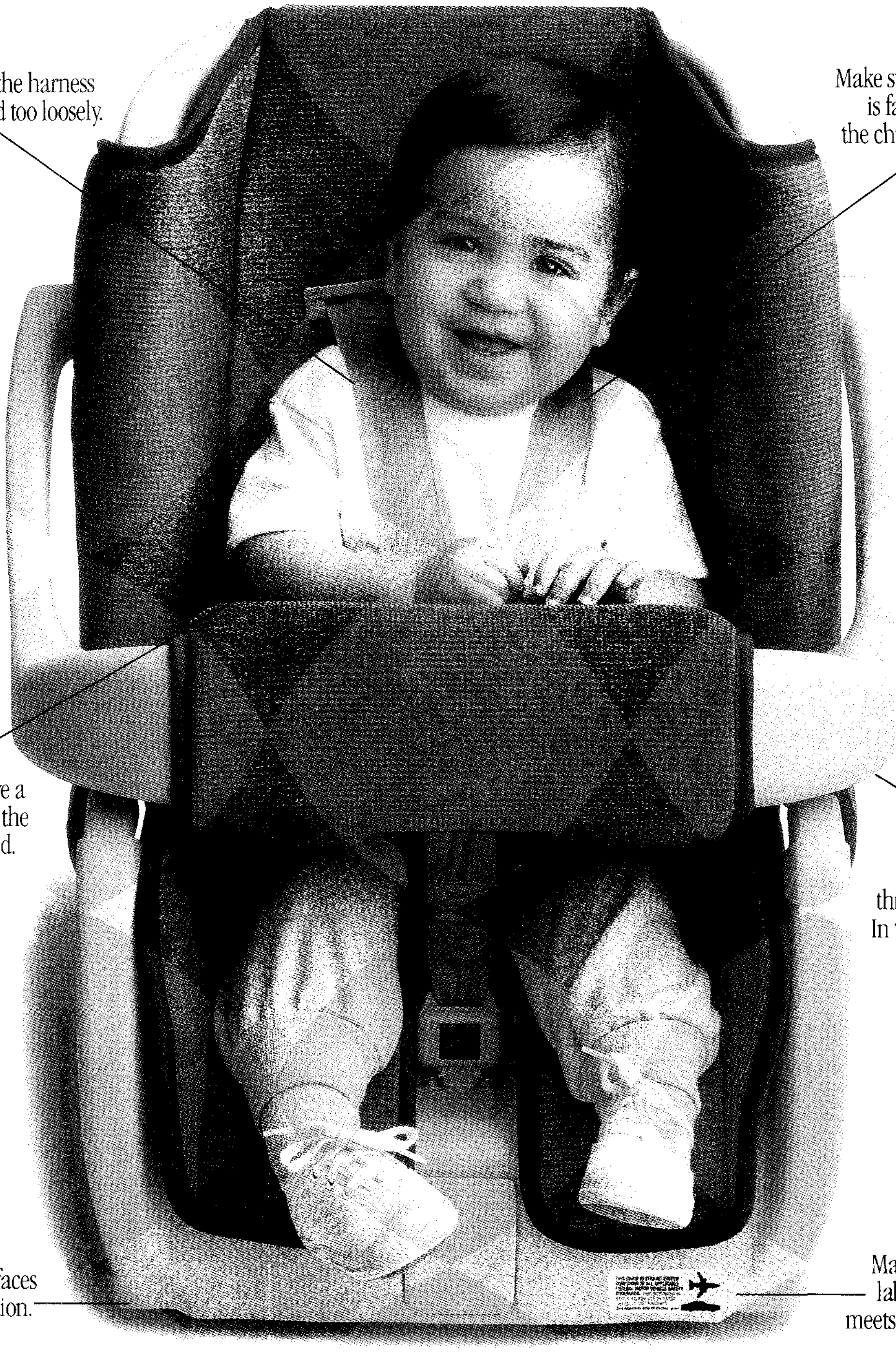

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

"OKLAHOMA!" opened on March 31, 1943, and they say that when it did, musical-theatre history was made. But we don't think the excitement of that occasion can compare with the excitement we felt, the other night, when Robbie Horwitz came down the aisle of the auditorium at P.S. 41 singing, "There's a bright golden haze on the meadow. . . ," and took up a stance on the stage steps. We don't actually know Robbie Horwitz (or anyone else connected with the show; we were there because a friend had said he was going off to a sixth-grade production of "Oklahoma!" and we'd said, Not without us you're not). But something about the way the kid sang—without polish or prissiness, going after the high notes the way he'd go after a fastball, say—won our heart.

For us, Rayme Sciaroni's production represented some sort of pinnacle. It was partly the three cows painted on a backdrop in different perspectives (we took a particular shine to the cow that was looking at the audience head-on) and partly the way the kids sang. It was partly the way the production (and everyone in it) managed to be topnotch without being precocious. Through all the cries of "Shhh!" and "Quiet, please!" from audience members with little sympathy for certain people's smaller brothers and sisters, there was no smirking or knowingness, just an openhearted embracing of the material. Nobody in the chorus was ever inattentive or out of character. Mr. Sciaroni had transformed a cast of M-G-M proportions into the most gung-ho, right-on-the-money ensemble you ever saw—and if you think there wasn't a hoedown number, boy are you ever wrong. (There were two, not counting the dance with parasols that the ladies did, plus a dream ballet complete with soloists and an onstage violinist.) What impressed us most of all was what the spirit with which these kids approached Rodgers and Hammerstein told you about where the world was in 1943. "Oklahoma!" is a show about transition ("brand new state"), with certain ideas about what's suggestive and what's sophisticated. It knows that bloomers are funny and isn't too sure how it feels about relations between boys and girls. Even the hero and heroine's resolution on this point—"Who cares if they tell on us?"—is unashamedly sixth grade.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27			

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

THE DAY BEFORE SPRING—A musical by Lerner and Loewe. The show disappeared following a five-month run in 1945, but it has now been reconstructed by Jerry Bell, who conducts the performance in a staging by Dania Krupaka. Previews June 26-27. (Theatre 1010, Park Ave. at 85th St. 924-0077.)

FALSETTOLAND—William Finn's new musical, with Michael Rupert, Stephen Bogardus, Faith Prince, and Chip Zien. Directed by James Lapine. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

JERSEY CITY—A play by Wendy Hammond, directed by Risa Bramon. With Alison Bartlett and Eddie Castrodod. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

MAIDS OF HONOR—*Elizabeth McGovern*, Kyra Sedgwick, and Laila Robins portray three sisters in this play by Joan Casademont. Previews through June 20. Opens June 21 at 8. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW—The first of two plays in the New York Shakespeare Festival's free summer series in the Park. Tracey Ullman and Morgan Freeman head the cast, and A. J. Antoon has directed. Previews begin June 22. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

NEW THIS SEASON

ASPECTS OF LOVE—Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cats or trains) but ends up being a sort of monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/23/90.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

BY AND FOR HAVEL—A pair of one-acters in revival. "By"—**AUDIENCE**—is based on an episode that occurred when Václav Havel had a menial job in a brewery; "for"—**CATASTROPHE**—is Samuel Beckett's poetic tribute to Havel when he was in prison. Together, they make an evening that is both comic and stirring. With Kevin O'Connor and Lou Brockway. (3/19/90) (John Houseman Studio Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF—As Maggie the Cat, Kathleen Turner seems in desperate straits in this limp and hapless revival of Tennessee Williams' most playable family melodrama. (4/2/90) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.)

THE CEMETERY CLUB—Eileen Heckart, Elizabeth Franz, and Doris Belack are three Jewish widows who meet each month to visit the graves of their dear departed. Ivan Menchell's play is a situation comedy, and just a bit above run-of-the-mill. The fine actresses are anything but, and John Lee Beatty's settings give the proceedings great distinction, as do Lindsay W. Davis's costumes. (5/28/90) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099.)

CITY OF ANGELS—Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular settings and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (12/25/89) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

CLOSER THAN EVER—This charmer amounts to an anthology of songs and sketches by Richard Maltby, Jr. (words), and David Shire (music). The fact that there is no amplification is an extra boon. (11/13/89) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Closes July 1.)

ELLIOT LOVES—Jules Feiffer's sharp-witted comedy about the sexes is an all but total success, partly because of the fine work of the two representatives—Anthony Heald (m) and Christine Baranski (f)—and of the director, Mike Nichols. (6/18/90) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

A FEW GOOD MEN—"Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series, but the performances, by an ace cast under Don Scardino's direction, are wonderful. (11/27/89) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

FOREVER PLAID—Stuart Ross's loving, tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. The performances of Jason Graae, Stan Chandler, David Engel, and Guy Stroman (as the Plaids, a close-harmony group snuffed out in the prime of life and brought back to earth for a single evening) are so deadpan, and the songs (arranged by James Raitt, who also accompanies on piano) are rendered at such a heightened pitch of musical good faith, that only from Ross's script and choreography would you know the thing is a parody. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

FURTHER MO'—A musical about the demise of black vaudeville, put together by and starring Vernel Bagneris. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

GRAND HOTEL—The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show (except for a glorious, eccentric dance by Michael Jeter), but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (11/27/89) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.)

THE GRAPES OF WRATH—This stage adaptation (by Frank Galati, who also directed) is the most truly adult version of Steinbeck's novel to date. It appeals to the mind rather than to the emotions; all the same, there's a cumulative effect. Don't go expecting to see John Ford or "Balm in Gilead," but expect to leave feeling as if you had. With Lois Smith and Gary Sinise. (4/2/90) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

GYPSY—This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical

Kyra Sedgwick, Elizabeth McGovern, and Laila Robins in "Maids of Honor"

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

(directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast (led by Tyne Daly, Crista Moore, and Jonathan Hadary) so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). Trust Broadway; you'll have ample time to welcome Miss Daly when she mounts the steps and delivers her first onstage line. (12/4/89) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

LETTICE & LOVAGE—The marvellous Maggie Smith plays Lettice Douffet, a freewheeling guide to England's stately homes, and the elegant Margaret Tyzack plays a reprimanding envoy sent by Lettice's employers in Peter Schaffer's merry comedy about an unlikely friendship and other matters. Paxton Whitehead and Bette Henritze are effective in supporting roles. Michael Blakemore was the director. (4/9/90) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

PHILADELPHIA, HERE I COME!—Brian Friel's wonderfully funny and touching play about a young man from a small Irish village on the eve of his departure for America really holds up in Paul Weidner's beautiful production. Grab this one: revivals this good don't come around often. (South Street Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

THE PIANO LESSON—August Wilson's new drama, the fourth in his series chronicling the black-American experience in the twentieth century, is set in Pittsburgh in 1936. In its exquisite writing and over-all structure (involving the conflict over a piano that figures hauntingly and intricately in one family's history) the play resembles "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" more than "Fences." Wilson takes refuge in an overly mystical and melodramatic ending, but there are some great scenes—even if the subtle ensemble acting in Lloyd Richards' production is thrown out of balance by an excessive performance by Charles S. Dutton. (4/30/90) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

PRELUDE TO A KISS—Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. Barnard Hughes is the old man, Mary-Louise Parker is the bride, and Timothy Hutton is the groom. (3/26/90) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

PRICE OF FAME—A play written by and starring Charles Grodin. With Lizbeth Mackay, Jeannie Berlin, Jane Alexander, Sam Groom, W.J. Paterson, and Joseph R. Sicari. Directed by Gloria Muzio. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

PRIN—The admirable Eileen Atkins and the director John Tillinger seem utterly wasted on this almost twist-for-twist rehash of the plot of Simon Gray's "Butley," written by Andrew Davies and set in a training college for women's physical-education instructors. (6/18/90) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Closes July 6.)

THE ROTHSCHILDS—A revival of the 1970 musical by Jerry Bock (score), Sheldon Harnick (lyrics), and Sherman Yellen (book). (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

SISTERS—A play by Marsha A. Jackson, performed by Andrea Frye and Ms. Jackson. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Closes July 1.)

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION—A new play by John Guare, with Stockard Channing, Kelly Bishop, Paul McCrane, James McDaniel, and John Cunningham. Jerry Zaks has directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN—A gospel musical comedy conceived and directed by Alan Bailey and written by Connie Ray. With Reathel Bean and Dan Manning. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

SPUNK—George C. Wolfe has adapted three short stories by Zora Neale Hurston, set in Harlem and the South, to make a gorgeous jazz-and-blues entertainment, giving them a powerful injection of his own mordant humor. Chic Street Man, singer and guitarist, wrote the dynamic score. With Ann Duquesnay (singer), and K. Todd Freeman, Reggie Montgomery, Kevin Jackson, and Danitra Vance (actors). Mr. Wolfe directed. (5/7/90) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

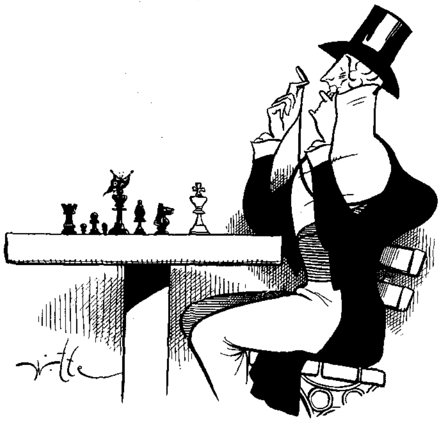
SWIM VISIT—A play by Wesley Moore, presented by the Primary Stages company. With Caroline Lagerfelt, Mark Metcalf, Pirie MacDonald, and Alice Haining. (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 333-7471.)

TALKING THINGS OVER WITH CHEKHOV—A comedy by John Ford Noonan, with Mr. Noonan and Diane Salinger. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

TRU—Robert Morse gives a deeply thought-out, accomplished performance as Truman Capote—by turns funny, bitchy, ironic, and rueful—at the end of his life and his tether. The play was written and directed by Jay Presson Allen. (1/1/90) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. Starting June 25, LaVern Baker takes over Miss Brown's role. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run recently celebrated its thirtieth birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **THE HEIDI CHRONICLES:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With Brooke Adams. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **JEROME ROBBINS' BROADWAY:** A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)



DANCE

WE'VE been reading over the past few months about the "new incivility" in New York, and within the past year we've learned about it firsthand, too. Our introduction took place last fall, in the New York State Theatre, during a performance of New York City Ballet. While Suzanne Farrell and Peter Martins performed an excerpt from "Liebeslieder Walzer," several theatregoers in the row behind us started to carry on a loud conversation. When the woman to our right asked them to wait until the dancing was over, one conversationalist informed her that "even though I'm only twenty, I know more about dance in my little finger than you, some woman off the street, will ever know." (As it happened, the woman was Rhoda Grauer, the former director of the dance program for the National Endowment for the Arts, and the street she'd just come from was Fifty-eighth Street, where her office as the production executive of "Great Performances" and "Dance in America" is located.)

From time to time, we slip away from dancing for a night to attend a musical concert. On a recent visit to Avery Fisher Hall for the Juilliard Orchestra's annual spring performance, we found ourselves being treated to an inciv. refresher course. A young man in the row behind us decided that he didn't care for the piece being played, so he lit up a cigarette. When the musical movement ended, a number of individuals pleaded with the smoker to put out his smoke, but he refused, taking deeper and deeper drags until he reached the filter tip, and the piece reached its close. Then a friend of his stood up and announced that he was tired of hearing from "old people" and that they should shut up. Furthermore, he said, any complaint to the management would be squelched by his father, "one of Lincoln Center's biggest patrons." By the time an usher was brought over, the cigarette stub was cold, but we thought we saw a little scar burned into the wooden floor of Avery Fisher. A major donor to Lincoln Center might well have some interest in that spot. The seats in question were M-5 and 7 of the orchestra.

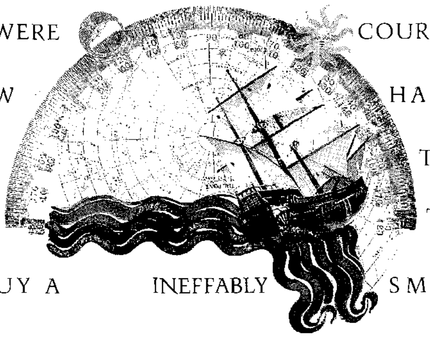
IN TOWN

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—June 19 at 8: "Watermill" and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ June 20 at 8: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Moves," "Kammermusik No. 2," and "Firebird." . . . ¶ June 21 at 8: "Watermill" and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ June 22 at 8: "Swan Lake," "Poulenc Sonata," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ June 23 at 2: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Kammermusik No. 2," "Pas de Deux," and "Brahms/Handel." . . . ¶ June 23 at 8: "Swan Lake," "Kammermusik No. 2," and "I'm Old Fashioned." . . . ¶ June 24 at 1: "Swan Lake," "Les Gentilhommes," and "I'm Old Fashioned." . . . ¶ June 24 at 7: "Fanfare," "Poulenc Sonata," "Kammermusik No. 2," and "Firebird." . . . ¶ June 26 at 8: "Les Gentilhommes," "Ives, Songs," and "Firebird." . . . ¶ June 27 at 8: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Concertino," "Gershwin Concerto," and "A Mass." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. The engagement runs through July 1.)

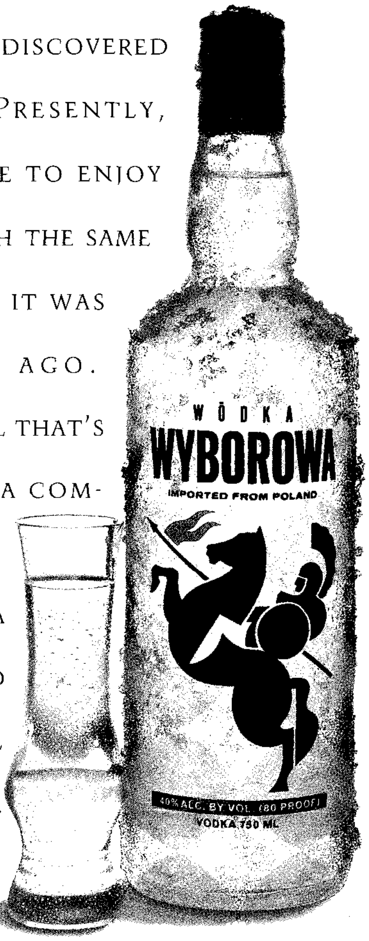
AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE—June 18-19 and June 21 at 8, and June 20 at 2 and 8: "Swan

THE FLAT EARTH, OAT BRAN AND POLISH VODKA.

The time: centuries ago. The prevailing belief: the earth was flat. There were plagues. And oat bran was still a few hundred years away. On the plus side, oat bran was still a good few hundred years away. You could buy a pretty nifty castle for $132.00. And there was Polish vodka. Wyborowa. (Vee-ba-rova.) First distilled centuries ago. And legendary ever since. A typical Polish repast back then, for example, might include borscht, jellied carp, roast pork, Polish sausage, quail eggs. And dessert? Polish pastries.



All of which was topped off with, of course, Wyborowa. Why has it flourished since the earth was flat? Taste it. You will find it ineffably smooth. A result of a triple-distilling process used centuries ago. Before they discovered shortcuts. Presently, it's still possible to enjoy Wyborowa in much the same manner in which it was enjoyed ages ago. Straight. All that's required is a comfortable chair, a clean glass and a bottle of said vodka. The quail eggs are optional.



"Vee-ba-rova" vodka from Poland. Enjoyed for centuries straight.

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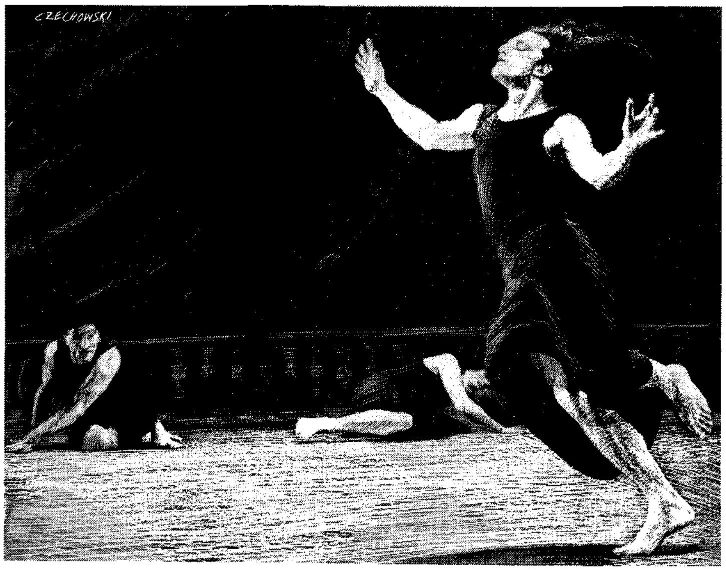


Mark Morris in "Dido and Aeneas"

Lake." . . . ¶ June 22 at 8: "Stravinsky Violin Concerto," "Jardin aux Lilas," and "Push Comes to Shove." . . . ¶ June 23 at 2: "Gala Performance," "Fall River Legend," and "Nine Sinatra Songs." . . . ¶ June 23 at 8: "La Bayadère (Act II)," "Jardin aux Lilas," "Some Assembly Required," and "Push Comes to Shove." . . . ¶ June 25 at 8: "Gala Performance," "Fall River Legend," and "Nine Sinatra Songs." . . . ¶ June 26 at 8: "La Bayadère (Act II)," "Fall River Legend," and "Rodeo." . . . ¶ June 27 at 2: "Birthday Offering," "Brief Fling," and "Rodeo." . . . ¶ June 27 at 8: "The Leaves Are Fading," "Dark Elegies," and "Gala Performance." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 30.)

"Dido and Aeneas"—A production of Henry Purcell's opera, staged and choreographed by Mark Morris. Performed by the Monnaie Dance Group/Mark Morris and the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, conducted by Nicholas McGegan. (Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., about a block east of Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. June 20-22 at 8 and June 23 at 3 and 8.)

New York International Ballet Competition—Thirty-four dancers from sixteen countries. Round 1: June 19 at 7:30 and June 20 at 8. . . . ¶ Round 2: June 21-22 at 8. . . . ¶ Round 3: June 23 at 8. . . . ¶ Round 4: June 24 at 7. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911.)

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—Opening performances of the season. Monnaie Dance Group/Mark Morris, June 26-30. The program includes the United States première of "Going Away Party." . . . ¶ "The Russian Village," twenty-four musicians and dancers from the Soviet Union, June 27-30. (Becket, Mass. For information about show times and tickets, call 1-413 243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

YOU couldn't ask for a better sound bite: a performance, on the eve of the Bush-Gorbachev summit, at Vartan's Bluebird, a recently opened jazz club whose co-proprietor, Vartan Tonoian, previously ran the Moscow Bluebird, one of Moscow's few independent jazz clubs. (It was recently shut down by Communist Party officials.) No wonder, then, that there were an inordinate number of spectators at the show clutching either a notebook or a camera; we wondered when Marlin Fitzwater would show up to field questions. Mr. Tonoian, who is twenty-nine years old and who emigrated to the United States sixteen months ago, is not unaware of the P.R. opportunities inherent in his project, what with Soviet-mania falling just short of Ninja Turtle and Simpson fevers. Not only does the music series here, which runs every Thursday night, feature Soviet and American performers (the first show was titled "Jazznost") but the owners have also given the club, which is housed in the old Irving Plaza (Irving Place at 15th Street), a few post-Cold War flourishes: the lobby features a love seat upholstered half in the Stars and Stripes and half in the hammer and sickle; and the stage, which is upstairs, has for a backdrop oversized Soviet and American flags draped side by side in peaceful coexistence. For the most part, however, the space looks like its old slightly musty, wood-panelled, union-meeting-hall self, with the most noticeable addition being some tables and folding chairs. The slapped-together feel seems somehow appropriate: this place could almost be in Moscow.

We don't mean to imply that everyone at the show we attended, which featured the (American) harmonica player William Galison and the (Russian) tenor saxophonist Igor Butman, was there to sniff out a news story. There were, for example, the four women seated at the table next to us, who talked loudly and animatedly throughout the show in what appeared to be Russian. None of them had a camera or a notebook, although one was smoking a pipe.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, near the flower and fur markets. Gregg Burge—he sings, he dances, he choreographs; what more could you want?—begins a three-week engagement on June 19. Places you may have seen the peripatetic Mr. Burge: TV's "The Electric Company," Broadway's "Sophisticated Ladies," the movie version of "A Chorus Line," Spike Lee's "School Daze," the Bush White House. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—The jazz personnel turns over nearly every night at this airy, loftlike restaurant-bar, in the gray zone between Zabar's and Columbia. Some may cry gentrification at the sight of the pastel walls, the potted greenery, and the bar crowded with zinfandel sippers, but the floor-to-ceiling windows make for some fine Broadway-viewing. Upcoming events: the **HAROLD LAND** quartet June 22-23; **RODNEY JONES** and band on June 24; an outfit led by **KYSIA BOSTIC** on June 25; the **JIM BALAGURCHIK** trio on June 26; and the **FRANK MORGAN** quartet beginning June 27. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A glitzy, color-coördinated jazz house, designed for maximum seating efficiency, where blue-suspendered waitresses sweep by your table bearing shrimp cocktails, champagne, and other trappings of the good life. After the show, out-of-towners flock to the upstairs souvenir shop, where, at last check, Blue Note golf balls were still available. Bassist **RAY BROWN,** whose long, illustrious career has included bebop-era recordings with Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, a term as Ella Fitzgerald's musical director, and many years on the road with Oscar Peterson, sets foot in here June 19-24, with his trio; pianist-singer-songwriter **DAVE FRISHBERG** makes it a double bill. Brazilian singer-pianist **TANIA MARIA** begins a stint on June 26. Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. Singer-guitarist **DAVID BAERWALD,** formerly of David and David, is pushing a good, introspective rock record of his own these days, and he'll be here June 19. **SHAWN COLVIN,** a pop-folk singer-guitarist who broke in as a backup singer for Suzanne Vega, comes in on June 20. The **BLUES PROJECT,** which performs here June 22-23, has had a somewhat erratic history. The group was prominent in New York in the mid-sixties, but soon disbanded, sending the founding members off to Blood, Sweat, and Tears, among other bands. Since then, there have been a couple of stabs at a reunion; this one will no doubt be marked by straight-ahead rock and jazz-rock, as well as all those heavy blues. **MARTI JONES,** a breezy pop singer along the lines of a younger Dusty Springfield, comes in on June 25, with songwriter Fred Koller; and **ANNIE HASLAM** turns up on June 26. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. A trio consisting of **RUFUS REID** (bass), **ROB SCHNEIDERMAN** (piano), and **AKIRA TANA** (drums) is in action through June 23, and the **VINCENT HERRING** quartet starts up on June 25. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Until June 30, the pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to **BOBBY SHORT** Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by heavy-metal acts, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. An older couple glide across the floor at a comfortable pace, lost in a nostalgic reverie; an eager young man, his tie loosened, his face perspiring, throws his date around like a crazed cossack. Ross LeCompte's Music Alive!, a Pittsburgh outfit, makes an appearance here on June 24. Music from eight to midnight.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this low-ceilinged, stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. **HANK JONES,** an elegant jazz pianist who first hit this town in 1943 and whose playing has touches of Art Tatum and Erroll Garner, starts with a trio June 19-24 and continues with a sextet beginning June 26. Music after ten.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—If submarines had jazz clubs, they might look like this basement haunt, which is reached by passing through a tight corridor where you half expect to bump into Admiral

Nimitz. This is not the place for those with a fear of intimacy: at the front tables you can go eye to eye with your favorite performers, and no matter where you're seated there's not much room to practice your T'ai Chi. The **GIL GOLDSTEIN** quintet is on hand June 19-24. Memphis tenor saxophonist **GEORGE COLEMAN** fires up his quartet beginning June 26. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL**, the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—Chinese food served in a plush greenhouse setting. Through the glass roof, which supports a jungle of potted greenery, you can admire the fruits of the midtown real-estate boom and, when available, the moon. A Steinway grand is encamped in the middle of the room, making things tricky for the waiters but improving the over-all quality of life. The bench is occupied by **SIR CHARLES THOMPSON** June 19-24, and by **ROSS TOMPKINS** starting June 26. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An unpretentious second-floor jazz retreat where a bandleader was once heard saying, "I wanna introduce my drummer first on account of because he has to go put a quarter in the meter." **JOHN PIZZARELLI**, a young, fleet-fingered seven-string guitarist and a smooth, cool-toned singer, is on hand on June 21, with a trio. Also: **KEN PEPLOWSKI'S** quartet on June 22, **JOEL FORRESTER'S** quintet on June 23, and pianist **DICK HYMAN** on June 25. Music from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

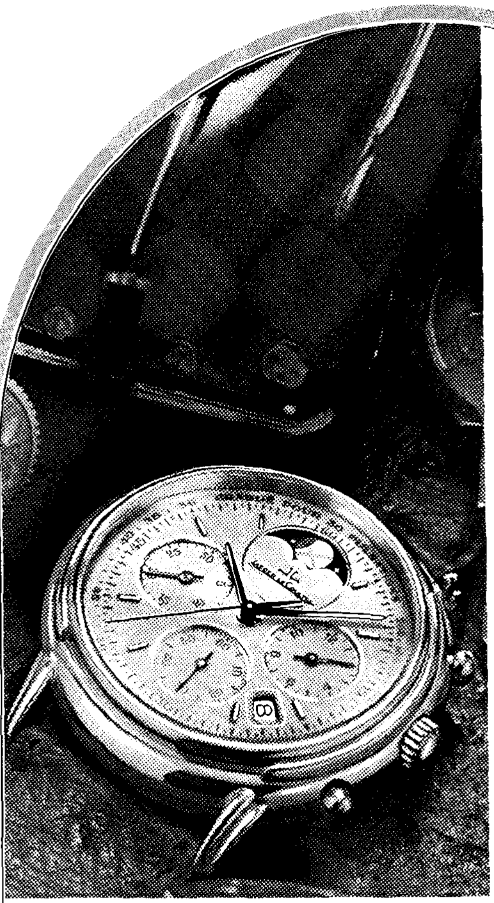
Kilimanjaro, 531 W. 19th St. (627-2333)—The northern branch of the popular Washington, D.C., night spot. As the name suggests, African music is the sine qua non, be it live or d.j.-spun. Calypso, reggae, and world-beat formats also turn up; in any case, the huge dance floor seldom lies fallow. There's a variegated reggae shindig here on June 22, featuring the **WAILERS** (of Bob Marley fame), **CHARLIE CHAPLIN**, **PETER BROGGS**, and the **ROOTS RADICS**. Music at eleven-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor music-and-performance space, where people come to ponder the meaning of harmolodics and the post-ness of postmodernism. The room is run by two amiable young guys from Wisconsin, whose views on such things as cover charges are enlightened. **VERNON REID**, the guitarist for Living Colour, leads a trio on June 19; **MARC RIBOT'S ROOTLESS COSMOPOLITANS**, a clang-und-bang ensemble that can go from a funk-on-the-edge groove one minute to something resembling kitchen appliances in revolt the next, claims June 21; **ELLIOTT SHARP'S CARBON** takes hold on June 22; and **MELVIN GIBBS' EYE & I** presides on June 23. Music after nine.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant and bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Washington Square-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry–potato chip hybrids. A bleary-eyed patron here was recently heard remarking, "I don't know about you people, but I'm feeling a lot of love in this room." June 22-23 are in the hands of soul queen **ETTA JAMES**. As a teen-ager in the fifties, Ms. James had an early-rock-and-roll hit with "Dance with Me, Henry." Later in her career, she recorded several soul classics—such as the aching ballad "I'd Rather Go Blind"—whose power is unsurpassed. Music at nine-thirty. Dining.

Marquee, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club just off the West Side Highway (and no relation to the famed London venue). The scheme is black walls, a high ceiling, an upstairs with tables and a view, and a booming audio system that makes anything sound good. **DEBORAH HARRY**, whose solo career has been given a lift by the success of her recent record, "Def, Dumb, and Blonde," performs on June 25. Other events: **THAT PETROL EMOTION** on June 19; **INSPIRAL CARPETS** on June 20; and the **BLACK CROWS** on June 21.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Good music, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the Hoboken Sound and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home, but the smell of the nearby Maxwell House factory might give them a boost.



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27			

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub for well-heeled gents and high-heeled ladies. **SID CAESAR** and **IMOGENE COCA** perform Tuesdays through Fridays at nine-thirty (shows June 19-20 at eight-forty-five) and Saturdays at nine and eleven-thirty. Comedienne and talk-show host **JOAN** ("Can we talk?") **RIVERS** does standup June 19-20 at ten-thirty. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs about eight dollars. There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined; an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking, "Is the water too warm?" **BETTY BUCKLEY,** an actress and singer with impressive Broadway credentials (she won a Tony for her performance in "Cats"), as well as a varied TV-and-film résumé, is making her cabaret début here. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; is back in a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. As of June 19, **CEDAR WALTON,** an underrated composer and a pianist who uses the blues and gospel to soften those hard-bop edges, will be here with bassist **RON CARTER** and drummer **BILLY HIGGINS.** The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Located on a Chelsea block that resembles an urban Disneyland (a pool hall, an indoor miniature-golf course, a trendy all-night diner, Limelight around the corner), this roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant is slicker than the original Tramps, but the emphasis on solid rock and blues remains. The music of **TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS**—a seminal reggae outfit led by Toots Hibbert, who's been known to smoke the peace pipe and recite Psalms during interviews—has been covered far and wide. ("Monkey Man" is a favorite among English bands.) They'll be setting the record straight here June 21-23. **CHRIS THOMAS** will perform on June 25, and the **PALADINS** come in on June 26. Music after eight.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the Terrace Bar, pianist **BILL MAYS** and bassist **JOHN GOLDSBY** will be in action June 19-24. Music from ten.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia, but the music is anything but stale. **CHARLES MC PHERSON,** an aggressive, deep-toned alto saxophonist who works in the tradition of the late Mr. Parker, leads a quartet here June 19-24; the **BOB MINTZER** big band starts up on June 26. Mondays are reserved for the late Mel Lewis's big band. Music after ten.

Betty Buckley at Rainbow & Stars

Wonderland, 519 2nd Ave., at 29th St. (213-5098)—When you're hungry for the blues, or just plain hungry. **JIMMY HEATH,** a saxophonist, songwriter ("Gingerbread Boy"), and brother of bassist Percy Heath, is in evidence June 21-23, with a quintet. Shows Wednesdays and Thursdays at nine and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine, eleven, and one. Dining.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—There are nether reaches in this L-shaped restaurant-and-bar where, but for music flyers, one might not know there were musicians on the premises. Those centrally seated, however, can keep an eye on **JOHN BUNCH** and **PHIL FLANIGAN** June 18-23. Music from eight weeknights and Sundays from seven.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

"JUST the facts, Ma'am." "Oh, *Rob*." "Here come de judge." "Oh, *Bob*." "Isn't that special?" "Hey, Meathead!" For better or worse, catchphrases we hear on the tube at night infiltrate our speech more quickly than anything we hear during the day; and right now there isn't a club owner in town who doesn't wish the name of his hot spot fell as readily off the tongue as the exclamations of David Alan Grier and Damon Wayans, the critically flaming "Men on . . . " duet from "In Living Color."

Thursday, June 7.

10:30 P.M.: Two young gentlemen and a lady, all with the requisite amounts of molding mud in their hair, emerge from Pulse, a new club at the unlikely location of 54th Street between Second and Third. When asked how they liked the "not-black-and-white-again"-decorated club, all three raise their left forearms in an arc and, with barely a sidelong glance between them, announce simultaneously in a nasal whine that could send a shudder clear across Long Island, "Hated it!"

11:30 P.M.: Standing outside Rex (Sixth Avenue near 16th Street) and getting tossed like wet salad in blue-cheese dressing, two couples step back and accost a duo who have hailed a cab with their right arms as they yank on their sweaters (which are stuck in the crowd) with their left. "How is it?" the quartet asks. Freeing their sweaters just in time, the duo swing them wide with the cry "Hated it!"

1 A.M.: Emerging from Building (at 51 West 26th Street, more widely known by its Friday-night designation, Powerhouse) after a party for designer Gordon Henderson, two kids issue an immediate review to no one in particular. "The crowd is nowhere." But, fingers poised to fly like lightning, they give the club "two snaps up!"

3 A.M.: Inside Quick! (6 Hubert Street, near Hudson Street), the walls are sweating and so is everyone within them. "I gotta go," one guy says after wiping his face on his shirt. "I'm tired." His friends refuse to accept his departure. "I said I'm tired," he repeats, and just to make sure they get the point he steps back and, paraphrasing "Men on . . . " 's highest, Zorroesque accolade, adds, "And I mean the unprecedented 'two snaps in Z' (as in lots of them for sleep) formation T-I-R-E-D." With that, his fingers become a miniature bicentennial celebration of sound.

Four clubs united by one pair. So much for the edge to summer night life when it's ruled by what we've heard at home.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Circus Oz—Final performances by this group from Melbourne. In its acts, the circus employs aboriginal music, Chinese acrobatics, performance art, and rock and roll, but no animals. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Closes June 24.)

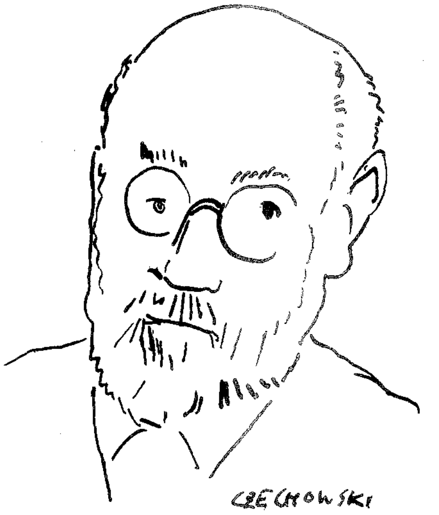
"Green Streets"—A performance work by Kevin Carter about the immigrant experience, which is staged in a downtown alley. (Cortlandt Alley, adjacent to Art in General, 79 Walker St. June 23 at 6 and 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

P.S. 122—June 21-24 at 9:30: "Not Entirely Appropriate," by Linda Mancini, is about the private and the public self. With Hilary Easton, Lisa Love, and Ms. Mancini. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

ART

IN May there were two fantastic exhibitions of postcard art by Gilbert & George, the half-English and all-Anglocentric duo renowned for, among other things, their performances as "living sculptures" nearly twenty years ago. The show of more recent work in the postal medium, at the Robert Miller gallery, titled "Twenty-five Worlds by Gilbert & George," all from 1989, was a blazingly visual bonfire of the faiths, hopes, *and* vanities. In each "world," three or four different postcard images—usually a young male pinup in a mild pose, a picturesque bit of landscape, and perhaps an altar—were cloned and arranged seven deep in rectilinear fashion, radiating from a core. Where "Burning Punk World" was a post-Python patchwork of satanic mugging, "Gold World," with its sunsets and Pakistani Elvis figures, evoked the new conquistador-style formality of contemporary Islam, while the ecclesiastical architecture and sweet, dusky young man in "Sky Blue World" conjured a kind of pacific and epicurean afterlife of the Raj. These postcard-icon montages resembled Byzantine mosaics, Amish quilts, Persian tapestries. Their optical rhythms suggested ecstatic prayer. Their effect was exalting.

In a catalogue essay for the show at Miller, the art historian Robert Rosenblum mentions "a fearful symmetry" worthy of Blake, quips that "the sun never sets on memories of the British Empire," and writes that "Gilbert & George . . . have displayed



Henri Matisse

a Dickensian breadth and zeal in documenting the commonplace facts of London life." His apt description is more evident still in the spring's third Gilbert & George show, "The New Cosmological Pictures," also from 1989, and on view at Sonnabend (420 West Broadway; through July 27). Here we find our Fine Middle-Aged Cannibals taking their own pictures again, in their more characteristically cinematic mode—out and about London, looking variously stern, amused, and engaged. The Gilbert & George London is, of course, not the mid-industrial London of "Our Mutual Friend." It is more the polyglot London of Hanif Kureishi's beautiful "Laundrette," and it's a sort of boy's version of the London many of us have seen in transition at that world-in-a-terminal called Heathrow. This cosmology includes "Lookers," "Skyers," a "Dead Head," and an "Edger." It is threatened with "Death over Life" even as it remains "Down to Earth" and "Seen." Our favorite G. & G. planet was "Hairy"—a kaleidoscope of trichological states seen in closeup, wherein the slatted back of a park bench is a Golgotha's comb.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"From Poussin to Matisse." The Russians seem to have entered the Western world by consuming French culture to the point of fetishization. This show—like so many the museum has mounted recently—celebrates not the great artists whose works are on display but the great amassers of French art, from Catherine the Great, who bought up vast collections whole and founded the Hermitage, to the non-aristocratic industrialists Shchukin and Morozov, who proved to be two of the world's most astute collectors of Post-Impressionist paintings. The show does include some superb works among its fifty paintings, most notably Poussin's "Tancred and Ermina," Watteau's "The Savoyard," and Fragonard's "The Stolen Kiss," but it doesn't really get going until the end, where there is a room of ten glorious Matisses painted between 1908 and 1913, among his finest works. Through July 29. . . . ¶ Colorfully glazed Chinese vases, jars, and figures can be seen in an exhibition of ninety-four pieces from the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) through the Ching (1644-1912). Through Aug. 26. . . . ¶ More than sixty sets of clothing worn by children from the eighteenth century to the twentieth will be on view in the Costume Institute. Starts June 20. . . . ¶ When two-thirds of the frames in a show are empty, one knows to pay strict attention to the frame itself. That is the desired effect of "Italian Renaissance Frames," which includes more than a hundred of the carved and gilded beauties. In a few cases—a Botticelli, an El Greco—paintings enhance what are works of art in themselves. . . . ¶ Sixty-one nineteenth-century wooden power figures, masks, and royal objects from Central Africa, on loan from the Museum of Anthropology, in Berlin. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—After Munch and, in a funny way, Hopper, Francis Bacon is the master of the silent scream. Whether his figures are twisted or streaked, boxed in or placed beside hooked meat, he repeatedly portrays the mute isolation of the individual—the trapped, unspoken, "No Exit" primal terror that is the modern condition. But the reason for the sacrosanct status of this eighty-one-year-old painter—is there any museum worth its salt without a Bacon of its own?—has always been a bit of a mystery. Unlike an artist such as de Kooning, who spent almost four decades painting in a very narrow range but managed to make his work look fresh most of the time, Bacon looks watered-down here. It seems as if little has been gained by mounting a full retrospective that couldn't have been accomplished with a half-dozen works. There's no stylistic development, no real change of expression, no refocussing of content. And there do not appear to be any key works, just good ones and great ones, and, yes, flat ones, and even excessively tricky ones. Perhaps it's time for a critical reassessment. Through Aug. 28. (A complementary show of thirteen paintings is at the Marlborough gallery, 40 W. 57th St. Through June 29.) . . . ¶ The exhibition "Matisse in Morocco" will consist of twenty-three paintings and several dozen drawings the artist made during his two visits to North Africa, in 1912 and 1913. Starts June 24. . . . ¶ A show of paintings, sculptures, collages, and photographs selected by Ellsworth Kelly. Included are works by Picabia, Brancusi, Malevich, and Mondrian. . . . ¶ Throughout this century, it has seemed that every kind of abstract painting, even the most radical, has been coöpted by commercial design. What a pleasure, then, to see an inversion of this formula in a small exhibition of fabric samples by Gunta Stölzl, the Bauhaus master weaver, and her student, the perhaps better-known Anni Albers. Both designers took advantage of, the period's industrial advances and applied a purist approach to the technology of weaving to create undeniable classics. Stölzl and Albers helped form the craft tradition of the Bauhaus, where the distinctions between fine and applied art were blissfully blurred. Through July 8. . . . ¶ Huge monochromatic wood engravings, mostly of a young woman with an enigmatic stare, by Franz Gertsch, a Swiss version of Chuck Close. Through June 26. . . . ¶ The Canadian artist Barbara Steinman is showing a site-specific video installation titled "Icon," which incorporates two photographs of a marble Madonna. Through July 31. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn, 1991.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Maurice Prendergast (1858-1924)." A retrospective of more than a hundred paintings by this popular artist and co-organizer of the legendary Armory Show demonstrates his ability to capture some very pretty moments of leisure with decorative mosaics of dabbed paint, but it also shows how he was trivialized by his own redundancy and overdependence upon tame Americana. Prendergast did what he did extremely well, but he was quick to emulate others' styles—Whistler, Puvis de Chavannes, and Matisse, to name the most obvious—without developing his own. Prendergast's identity seems hidden by a well-engineered and selfless storm of paint. . . . ¶ Another retrospective, of paintings and drawings by Hans Hofmann (1880-1966), starts June 21. . . . ¶ "Signs of Love," a large-scale installation work by Ree Morton (1936-1977) that is the magnum opus of this pivotal and shamefully overlooked artist, looks as original and unsettling as it did when it was first exhibited in the Whitney's 1977 Biennial. With its painted and swagged ladders, frilly ribbons and flowers, and postage-stamp

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ART–Cont'd

portraits of a fairy-tale prince and princess, it is an irreverent celebration of sentimentality. It exists in a realm somewhere between painting and sculpture, without caring about the conventions of either; it was created at a time when the austerity of minimalism still reigned. It also celebrates the brazen freedom of feminism, of an as yet unnamed post-modernist spirit, and of a community of artists whose decisions were based on ideas and personal challenges, not on the desires of the market. Through July 22. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"The Intimate Interiors of Édouard Vuillard" includes more than a hundred paintings and works on paper, all completed between 1890 and 1900. Through July 30. . . . ¶ A companion exhibition of prints by the Nabis painters, including works by Vuillard, Bonnard, Maurice Denis, Félix Vallotton, and Ker-Xavier Roussel. . . . ¶ The exhibition "Facing History," a pure example of art illustrating history, traces the image of blacks in American art from 1710 to 1940. More often than not, as one might suspect, the images are primarily of servitude and the method used is caricature. The paintings, drawings, and occasional sculptures are best viewed from an iconographic point of view, and the purpose of the black man in John Singleton Copley's "Watson and the Shark," the best work on display, continues to be the source of heated disagreement. Through June 25. . . . ¶ A site-specific installation by Winifred Lutz is on view in the museum's lobby. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

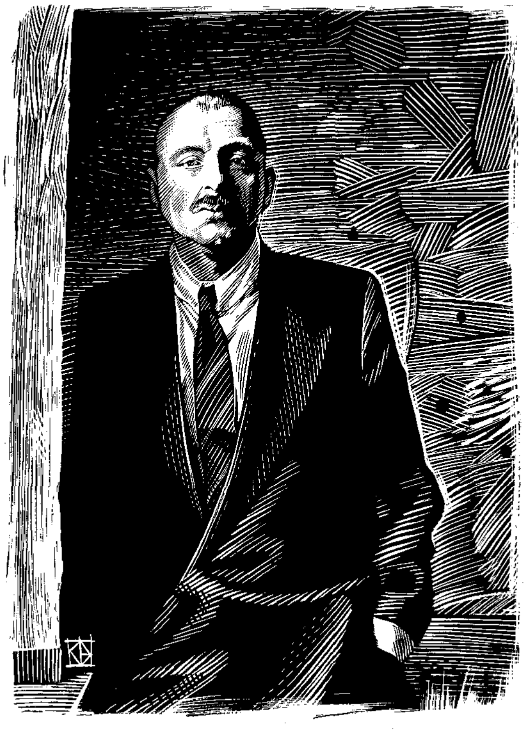
American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Art from Northeastern Zaire" includes four hundred artifacts, such as sculptures, musical instruments, furniture, and weapons, along with many photographs and drawings, all from the museum's Lang-Chapin Expedition (1909-15). (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Twenty-four custom-built doghouses by contemporary architects and designers are on view in the museum's garden. There are doghouses made of bones, rawhide dog chews, and, in one case, an old television console with "Lassie Come Home" stenciled on its empty screen. Lew Davis and Will Paxson's "The Trojan Dog" is a painted wood pooch with lolling tongue, eager eyes, and, true to Greek myth, a door in its hollow belly. Alexander and Nell Twining's "Cheops Dog House" is a pyramid-shaped palace for Pharaonic dogs. And Ted Trussel Porter's "Bauwauhaus," a droll entry whose lowly function contrasts sharply—and wittily—with its severe, Gropius-style design, is fashioned from a modernist table turned upside down. Most appealing is Michael McDonough's "Dog House in the Mayan Style." A replica of La Iglesia at Chichén Itźa, it is constructed entirely from dog biscuits. Its adobe-colored walls glisten from multiple coats of marine varnish, intended to protect it from pouring rain and hungry puppies. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—Writing boxes, tea caddies, and *sake* cups are among the forty pieces of Japanese lacquer ware on view. Through June 24. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"In the Court of the Sultan." In this comprehensive display on the life of the Sephardic Jews of the Ottoman Empire, most of the objects—even the ornate ones—are unspectacular. The period documented is from the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth, a time of decline for the Ottomans, of increased Western influence, and of growing intolerance toward Jews. From the velvet bedspreads that were remade into ark curtains to the ceremonial and everyday costumes (some decreed by law), the menorahs, and the furniture, a homey aesthetic dominates. But it is nonetheless a fascinating exhibition, one that effectively captures the spirit of daily life. Through June 28. . . . ¶ Two displays of photographic work, by the artists Wijnanda Deroo and Hélène Hourmat. Through Aug. 2. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—From an exquisite portrait of a woman by Petrus Christus to a delicate watercolor of the Château Noir by Paul Cézanne, this superb exhibition of five centuries of master drawings from the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen (in Rotterdam) is a joy. Despite the fact that all the French and Italian drawings and many of the Dutch and Flemish ones originally owned by the Boymans were destroyed in a fire in 1864, since then the museum has put together one of the finest collections of its sort. There is a toe-curling drawing of feet by Dürer, a spellbinding allegory called "Temperance" by Bruegel, a mystifying and exceedingly rare Giorgione, and fine examples by Altdorfer, Grünewald, Rembrandt, Annibale Carracci, Pisanello, and Goya. There are Watteaus that could make you weep, as well as fine works by Ingres, Daumier, and Manet. Through Aug. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)



Markus Lüpertz

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—An exhibit devoted to Portugal's pioneering maritime exploration, notably of Brazil, and its impact on European culture. Maps, treaties, and navigational instruments from the mid-fifteenth century to the late sixteenth are on display, along with manuscripts, letters, and paintings. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 6.)

Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park—"The Expressionist Surface" is a show of thirty-five paintings, sculptures and installations, all incorporating plaster. Among the sixteen artists represented are George Segal, Susan Laufer, Peter Agostini, Grace Knowlton, and Jonathan Silver. Through Aug. 26. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5:30.)

The Decade Show—This show has a noble, anti-authoritarian ambition—the forced integration of the Eurocentric art scene through a review of the nineteen-eighties art world that embraces the "others" ignored by the mainstream. The exhibition is well intentioned, but it tries to do too many conflicting things, and it's richer for the issues it raises than for the art it contains. It is a collaborative event organized by three institutions (the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, the Studio Museum in Harlem, and the New Museum), and it is divided according to themes, two per venue. By far the most cohesive installation is at the Studio Museum, where Group Material and Barbara Kruger seem to be the only ones to have addressed the complex issues of the show, and where one work after another—by whites, African-Americans (Hammons, Colescott, Edwards), and Hispanics (Azaceta)—is installed to look as good as each is. What the show calls for, ultimately, is no less than the dismantling of the entire value structure upon which judgment is currently based: no more artist geniuses, no more masterpieces, no more connoisseurship, as they are known. However ideologically up to date the viewpoint may sound, it requires a much more radical redefinition of art than any the system would willingly adopt. Through Aug. 18. The exhibition runs concurrently at the **new museum,** 583 Broadway (open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8); the **museum of contemporary hispanic art,** 584 Broadway (open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, 11 to 5; Thursdays and Fridays, 11 to 8); and the **studio museum in harlem,** 144 W. 125th St. (open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6). A free shuttle bus runs between SoHo and Harlem on each Saturday during the show.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Vasily Ermilov (1894-1968)—This pioneer of Constructivist art in the Ukraine lived the latter part of his life in obscurity, producing the accepted social-realist art by day and continuing in his modernist idiom on the sly at night. The current exhibition is extensive, including work from throughout his career, with an emphasis on small paintings on paper. There are also several refined but dull figurative studies, and a model and photodocuments of a major work, the quintessential Constructivist speaker's rostrum Ermilov designed in 1927 for the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution. Some of the most animated works are book designs from the twenties and thirties. Through June 23. (Hutton, 33 E. 74th St.)

Short List—**marsden hartley,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (open Mondays, through June 30); **lawrence kupferman,** Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (through June 29); **a. r. penck,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (Open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through July 21); **robert rauschenberg,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through June 27); **antonio segui,** Bernard, 33 E. 74th St. (through June 29); **max weber,** Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through July 21).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Eugène Carrière (1849-1906)—An exquisite exhibition of nineteen sepia-toned paintings and one pastel by this underrated French Symbolist. Carrière's figures are enveloped in a rapturous haze of sorrow; the Pietà-like "Death of Gauguin" depicts one of the most tender embraces ever painted. Through June 30. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)

David Lowe—Fairly indifferent, heavily glazed landscape paintings on wood panels, some of which hint of ancient culture and "the sands of time." Through June 30. (Shea & Beker, 20 W. 57th St.)

"Outsiders"—A fine display. Included are the childlike drawings of dogs, cats, and other animals by Bill Traylor, a former slave; Justin McCarthy's succulent paintings of cantaloupes, yellow puffball dahlias, and camels in the desert, which stand comparison with works by the better-trained Malcolm Morley; and maniacally obsessive, phantasmagoric portrait drawings by Ted Gordon, who is so hard on his ballpoints that his patterned lines are literally carved into paperboard. Through June 22. (Ross, 50 W. 57th St. Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)

Short List—**francis bacon,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 29); **peter briggs,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through July 14); **william garbe,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (open Mondays, through July 13); **maryann harman,** Ulysses, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 29); **hans hofmann,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (closed Saturdays, through June 29); **rené magritte,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through June 30), and Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through June 29).

GALLERIES—SoHo

David Chambard—Aged-wood chairs, some deconstructed and framed, some flattened and placed on shelves or in shallow boxes of worn wood. They make one think of Margaret Wharton, of Bill Woodrow, and even a little of John Armleder, but they also express an ennui all their own. Through July 7. (Facchetti, 476 Broadway.)

Francesco Clemente / Outtara—Ten intensely poetic drawings from 1981 entitled "Ten Bad Mothers," which display Clemente at his self-absorbed best—birth images, fetal adults, an occasional egg, and a man vomiting what could be an internal organ, a baby, or a phallus. / Large paintings with lots of sticks, tribal and church imagery, and ancient Egyptian motifs in earthen browns by an African Palladino. They are skillful and ambitious, but low on emotion. Through June 23. (Baghoomian, 555 Broadway.)

Julio Galan—The artist's second one-man gallery show is as affecting as his first, and more knowing—if such a thing is possible. Galan, something of a professional enfant terrible, has been brushing up on his Francesco Clemente, it seems. Still, this show includes a split-mirror image in which the artist makes the best, most commonsensical use of a diptych format seen in some time. And with another painting—a hilarious, hyper-Proustian, oblong portrait of the artist as a young invalid—he weighs in with an absolutely original instant classic. Through June 29. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

David Knudsvig—"The Cteno Series," an attractively installed first one-man show of two-dimensional works by an artist who has put a comblike symbol through methodical permutations—variously in graphite, charcoal, ink wash and wheat starch, encaustic, and beeswax. These calligraphic, vaguely Arabic-looking drawings and waxy-skinned paintings are shown alone, in groups, and as diptychs. They are elegant and handsome, some might say Johnsian in appearance, but have a rather obsessive, thin-lipped, neo-conceptual feel. Through June 23. (Petersburg, 130 Prince St.)

Joyce Kozloff—The portrayal of copulating couples dates back to Egyptian tomb painting and pervades virtually every culture. For several years, this artist, best known for her exotic ceramic and mosaic decorations of public places, has been quietly developing a series of watercolors that are as finely detailed as manuscript illuminations and are amalgams of historically bona-fide art works of a sexually explicit nature. Kozloff throws Chinese, Indian, Japanese, European, and American images—high and low—into a luscious, bawdy stew of what she calls "Pornament." Her work makes all the uproar over Robert Mapplethorpe's most graphic sexual photographs seem silly. Through June 23. (Lorence-Monk, 578 Broadway.)

Zofia Kulik—Collages made of photographs of nudes—mostly male—arranged in repetitive patterns to form carpets, pinwheels, and medals. The works by this young Polish artist mock different sorts of European authoritarianism, but they are pretty dull, especially when the over-all designs dominate. Pieces that incorporate an occasional bullet, seashell, or flag are more compelling. Through June 23. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

Markus Lüpertz—Paintings that explore very complex and confusing spatial relationships, using images that are lifted from reproductions of paintings by Poussin and set against various grounds, primarily with militaristic-looking Cubist forms floating in them. The works are so skillfully executed that they have the presence of instant masterpieces, but somehow they remain remote. Through June 30. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

John McCracken—Three fine, surfboard-slick sculptures from the sixties and several drawings. Through June 23. (Wolff, 560 Broadway. Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)

Tatsuo Miyajima—A harsh, cold installation about information-age overload. The piece consists of red LED signs flashing what appear to be intricately programmed, random numbers in an otherwise pitch-black room. Through June 29. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)

Tony Oursler—These peculiar video sculptures use surrealism and camp to talk about environmental and psychic pollution. In their rickety assemblage they hark back to the halcyon late-seventies days of Colab, and despite their unevenness they are among the most original attempts to incorporate video into art-object-making. One particularly pungent work consists of a video text about workers' exposure to toxic chemicals, projected from a tipped-over oil drum onto a shiny, cast-glass spill on the floor, with the letters bending psychedelically to the contours of the spill. Through the simple elimination of the TV rectangle, Oursler has created a most effective sculptural work. Through June 30. (Brown, 560 Broadway.)

Carl Palazzolo—This talented and very deft painter is also a relentless processor of styles. Here, in the midst of lyrical-abstract passages that may remind viewers of recent work by Ross Bleckner, Terry Winters, and Pat Steir, among others, the artist also gives vent to his obsession with a single painting by John Singer Sargent—"The Daughters of Edward D. Boit," painted in 1882. Images of these Bostonian sisters and their appurtenances crop up as fully realized copies, as fragments, as pentimenti, and, ultimately, as question marks. Palazzolo's work is visually enjoyable, as always, but also so blithely arbitrary it can set the marbles rattling in your head. Through June 23. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

ACCIDENTAL TOURIST

The best way to trap a hairy rhinoceros is to dig a giant hole in the Sumatran rain forest—preferably along a path marked by rhino footprints—and then to wait until one falls in. Rapunzel, the hairy rhino who arrived last month at the Bronx Zoo, fell into just such a pit last August, and then travelled by truck to the Indonesian coast, by motorboat to Singapore, by KLM passenger jet to Amsterdam, where she caught a plane for Los Angeles (her temporary winter residence), and, finally, by Fed Ex cargo jet to her permanent home at the Bronx Zoo: a grassy yard cum swimming hole behind the elephant house. Rapunzel is the latest acquisition of the Sumatran Rhino Trust, a collaborative endeavor among four American zoos and the Indonesian government to save the hairy rhino from extinction. The Trust hopes eventually to raise a captive population of hairy rhinos, but all three of those now living in the States are female. Rapunzel is short, only four feet tall, but what she lacks in height she makes up for in weight. Her seventeen-hundred-pound frame is completely covered with hair. She is as hairy as, say, a buffalo. Her ears look like super-de-luxe bottle brushes. Her favorite meal is a heap of leafy branches, and she hums, whistles, and snorts in appreciation when lunch is served. The zoo's director, William Conway, said, as he regarded Rapunzel with fatherly pride, "We called her Rapunzel because of her hair and, of course, because of her singing."

Julian Schnabel—The Pace gallery opens its new downtown outlet, in what had been Leo Castelli's Greene Street space, with the season's most ambitious exhibition, a Julian Schnabel Production of massive-scale sculptures, all in bronze. The walls are lined with nonfigurative "Tomb Panels," which are so resonant with emotion that they could be a postmodern version of the Medicis' final resting place. There's a funny piece called "Barbara Bush Skipping Down the Champs Élysées," and a history-of-art sculpture consisting of a Beuysian table with Indian dolls and a primitive sculpture of the sort favored by the early modernists, all supported by amphorae. Through June 29. (142 Greene St. . . . ¶ Another large Schnabel sculpture, "Ozymandias," has been installed in the Plaza at the Seagram Building, 375 Park Ave., at 52nd St.)

Jeanne Silverthorne—An elegant, precisely edited and sparely installed first one-woman show of ten cast-rubber table and floor pieces by a talented young sculptor whose work can also be lusher and more variegated than is indicated here. Silverthorne is torn between the lavishness and sensuality of the baroque and the modesty and whimsy of more recent three-dimensional genres—at some shifting midpoint, say, between an Anthony Caro and a Richard Tuttle. It's a rich conflict, one that should prove interesting to follow. Through June 29. (Burgin, 130 Prince St. Closed Saturdays.)

"Newer Sculpture"—Perhaps an analogue to the Whitney's recent "New Sculpture" exhibition, this show features works by some fine artists, including four represented at the Whitney. It contains a knockout work or two—a Nancy Graves bone sculpture is the most notable—but it lacks substance and coherence. Through June 29. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

"American Masters of the 60s"—A power show in a new power space, similar in size and scale to a floor at the Whitney. Among the most resonant of these superb art works from the sixties, by all the expected blue-chip names, are those by Lichtenstein, Smith, Martin, Judd, Serra, Nauman, and Smithson. In most instances, older pieces are juxtaposed with more recent works by the same artists. Through June 23. (Shafrazi, 130 Prince St.)

"The Work of Art in the Age of Perestroika"—This display of recent works from the Soviet Union has the kind of vibrant energy New York has not witnessed since the Mickey-and-Judy shows of Colab and the early East Village scene. The emphasis is on the younger generation, and while the over-all quality of the work is high, there is something unsettling about the circumstances: it is an art that has risen through the cracks as a form of creative resistance, but it has now been seized by an alien marketplace that consumes first and thinks later. There are works that are reminiscent of what has been produced here over the past fifteen years, but to read too much into those connections would be to entirely miss the vitality of this new crop of artists. Through June 30. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Group Show—The tone at the Stux gallery is as consistent as can be; the art is gray or brown, heavily constructed while shunning craft, distressed in surface if not in spirit, glib, pseudo-conceptual or pseudo-painting or pseudo-fill-in-the-blank. The work is emotionally remote, occasionally poignantly so. "Impregnation" (1967), by Gerhard Hoehme, is a funny, somewhat horrific, and somehow beautiful canvas being force-fed paint through plastic tubes. Vik Muniz's old Curity diapers stained with mock Rothko, Noland, and Malevich paintings are also extremely clever. Through July 31. (155 Spring St.)

Short List—**ELAINE ANTHONY,** Haller, 415 West Broadway (through June 30); **GEORG BASELITZ,** Nolan, 560 Broadway (through July 21); **MOE BROOKER,** Kelly, 591 Broadway (through July 20); **HARRISON BURNS,** Donahue, 560 Broadway (through June 30); **DORIANA CHIARINI,** Ala, 560 Broadway (through June 30); **KANG L. CHUNG,** Staempfli, 415 West Broadway (through July 13); **CLAES EKLUNDH,** Dolan Maxwell, 154 Wooster St. (through June 30); **MAX FERGUSON,** Henoch, 80 Wooster St. (through June 30); **MICHEL GOULET,** Shainman, 560 Broadway (through July 20); **DAVID HOCKNEY,** Kasmin, 580 Broadway (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, starts June 19); **ELLSWORTH KELLY,** 65 Thompson Street Gallery (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through July 31); **WINIFRED LUTZ,** Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through June 30); **DAVID NASH,** Louver, 130 Prince St. (through June 23); **NANCY OLIVIER,** 55 Mercer Street Gallery (through June 23); **RAYMOND PETTIBON** and **ROBERT FLACK,** Feature, 484 Broome St. (through July 7); **LYNDA RAY,** A.I.R., 63 Crosby St. (through June 23); **JACQUES ROCH,** Exit Art, 578 Broadway (through July 14); **ALAN SONFIST,** Protetch, 560 Broadway (through July 27); **JOAN STOLZ,** Bace, 584 Broadway (through July 14); **PAUL THEK,** Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through June 30); **MORIHIRO WADA,** Milliken, 98 Prince St. (through July 20); **KARSTEN WITTKE,** Good, 532 Broadway (through July 13).

PHOTOGRAPHY

SINCE the weather warmed up, we've been wondering how to plan our kind of weekends this summer—and at the same time please our loved ones, who are from the faith-in-fresh-air school. Sure, it's nice to buy corn at roadside stands, and to feel grass underfoot, but our favorite break as the city empties involves staying put. Physically, the experience reminds us of being in a laundromat, but that's part of what makes one feel like such a hard-core New Yorker on the days when so many people have fled. At such a time, the city feels less like a ghost town than like a small town, where cabs aren't stolen out from under you by the desperate, where you don't have to be Madonna to get a table at a restaurant, and, most of all, where you feel like you and all the other people who remain have a secret: New York is a summer place.

There are those who push the country and the seaside as antidotes to city stress. To us, however, stress is sand in our mouth at a picnic, bees buzzing around our head, and trains and jitneys that leave without us. So we were happy to find a couple of entrepreneurs who have come up with an object that's the perfect photographic "out" for New Yorkers like us. Let's call it "new-wave photography."

We saw the object in a setting that needs it less than we do—on the boardwalk in Venice, California. It's a great wave, ten-feet high or so, and built out of fibreglass. It's painted turquoise blue and foamy white, and you step up and into it to have a five-dollar Polaroid taken. Each poser stands on a surfboard during the shoot. The result is a convincing trompe-l'oeil snapshot that makes everybody look like a champ. We need a few of these on the sidewalks of New York, so that anytime someone asks, "*But how can you stand the summer* there?" we can send them a picture.

ERIC FISCHL—Photographs of Saint-Tropez beaches that are so physically charged that you can almost smell the sand, the sea, and the oily bodies that run across the walls like a continuous ribbon. Fischl takes some seemingly dramaless moments between people and turns them into scenes of explosive psychological and sexual tension. Through June 23. (Koury Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

MARION POST WOLCOTT—The photographs Wolcott took during the Depression, under the auspices of the Farm Securities Administration, add significantly to our vision of rural America of that time, but her most personal shots are those of her family: they are casual and full of warmth and feeling. Through June 24. (International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

SHORT LIST—**CECIL BEATON,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (closed Saturdays, through July 13); **MARC COHEN** (through July 7), and **PASCAL KERN** (through June 30), Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays); **MARGARET COURTNEY-CLARKE,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (opens at noon on Saturdays, through July 13); **DAVID GREENBERG,** Sorkin, 596 Broadway (through June 30); **MAURICIO HERRADOR,** O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway (through July 14); **LEON LEVINSTEIN,** Photofind, 138 Spring St. (through June 29); **BARBARA NORFLEET,** Sikkema, 155 Spring St. (opens Saturdays at noon, through June 30); **WOWS,** Englehorn, 591 Broadway (through July 14).

MUSIC

THERE are some bodies of musical literature of unquestioned greatness that never quite become known territory, being simply too big for any but a tiny group of specialists to grasp whole. We think, for instance, of the six hundred-plus songs of Schubert, the more than five hundred keyboard sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti, or the roughly two hundred church cantatas of J. S. Bach, with their myriad arias and duets. These stand in contrast with, say, the nine symphonies of Beethoven, with which tens of thousands are surely familiar, or even his thirty-two piano sonatas, which hundreds of aspiring or practicing pianists have compassed.

The happy situation with the larger bodies is that one may dip in almost endlessly and have the satisfaction of a new discovery (or the rediscovery of a forgotten marvel). The Bach Aria Group has been in that business for decades, and this is the time of year when its members set up shop at Stony Brook (concerts began on the 13th and will continue through the 23rd) and at the Chelsea Center, in Muttontown, on Northern Boulevard just west of Route 106 (a day-long marathon on the 24th; call 1-516 632-7230 for information and tickets for all events).

For territory thoroughly (for some, numbingly) well known, try the opening of Caramoor: Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and his "Emperor" Piano Concerto, on the 23rd.

IN TOWN

METROPOLITAN OPERA, CONCERT PRODUCTIONS—**CENTRAL PARK'S GREAT LAWN:** June 19 at 8 (rain date, June 21), "La Traviata," with Marilyn Mims, Alfredo Kraus, and Sherrill Milnes; conducted by Christian Badea. . . .**NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN, THE BRONX:** June 20 at 8 (rain date June 21), "Rigoletto," with Ruth Ann Swenson, Taro Ichihara, and Frederick Burchinal; Marcello Panni. . . .**CUNNINGHAM PARK, QUEENS:** June 22 at 8 (rain date June 24), "La Traviata," with Karen Huffstodt, Alfredo Kraus, and Motti Kaston; Christian Badea.

BACH ARIA GROUP—J. S. Bach's Cantata No. 205, "The Appeasement of Aeolus," receives a fully staged production with an English libretto by Sheldon Harnick. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. June 18 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

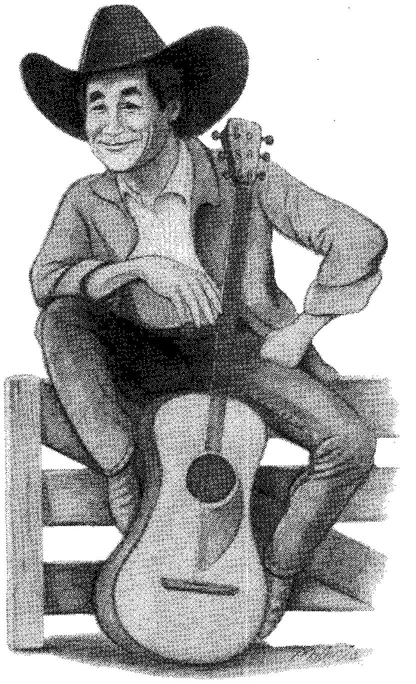
OPERA EBONY—Wayne Sanders conducts a staged version of "The Outcast," a new opera by Noa Ain. With vocal soloists and a chamber ensemble. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. June 19 at 8.)

HESPERION XX TRIO—Soprano Montserrat Figueras, guitarist/theorbo player Rolf Lislevand, and viola da gambist Jordi Savall present variations and cantatas from the sixteenth century through the eighteenth. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. June 20 at 5:45.)

BARGEMUSIC—Presenting Nai-Yuan Hu, violin; Jerry Grossman, cello; and Ick-Choo Moon, piano, playing a Stravinsky suite, a Fauré sonata, and a Mendelssohn trio, with the Manhattan skyline in the background. (Bargemusic, Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. June 21-22 at 7:30 and June 24 at 4.)

OUT OF TOWN

CARAMOOR MUSIC FESTIVAL—The festival's forty-fifth season opens June 23 and will run through August 19. June 23 at 8:30: An all-Beethoven evening, with pianist Vladimir Feltsman and the Orchestra of St. Luke's, conducted by Julius Rudel. . . .¶ June 24 at 5:30: The Ensemble for Early Music, conducted by Frederick Renz, performs "A Medieval Mosaic," including sacred and secular music. (Katonah, N.Y. Buses for Caramoor will be at the Katonah station to meet trains leaving Grand Central on Saturdays at 2:50 and 5:30 and Sundays at 2:50. For information about tickets and trains, call 1-914 232-1252.)

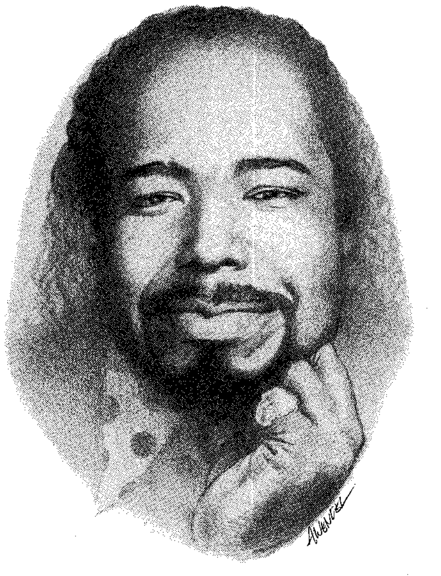


Black (Clint) . . .

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

CLINT BLACK—A first-rate country singer, Clint Black, like Randy Travis, knows the value of a restrained melancholic phrase. But unlike Travis, who relies heavily on other songwriters and Nashville session men, Black has his own band and writes his own tunes. While many of today's balladeers sound awkward and old-fashioned, Black manages to create a genuine, down-home mood that's amazingly heartfelt. His 1989 début album, "Killin' Time," is a huge success (it's still No. 1 on the country charts), owing, in part, to his convincing delivery. In concert, this genial performer comes across beautifully. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. June 22 at 8.)

BARRY WHITE—An unlikely but true sex symbol of the seventies, Barry White made a career out of moaning lush ballads in his deep, attractive voice. In the early seventies, he was everywhere. As a singer, songwriter, and producer he was responsible for hits by Love Unlimited (a female vocal trio) and the Love Unlimited Orchestra. His own pre-disco clas-



and White (Barry)

sics, like "Never Gonna Give Ya Up," are the essence of dark, dreamy evening music. His sound is popular again—Lisa Stanfield's recent million-selling smash, "All Around the World," owes a great deal to White's "Can't Get Enough of Your Love, Babe." It's retro romance music, sexually uninhibited and quite easy to fall for. Bring a date. (Pier 84, Twelfth Ave. at 45th St. June 19 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 307-7171.)

MADONNA—She may be photographed like a chanteuse, but she can't sing like one. Some of the current tour's costumes, which were designed by Jean-Paul Gaultier, are out of a Fritz Lang nightmare. The show does have some captivating moments, but for the most part Madonna seems to have disappeared inside her own star-making machinery. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. June 20-21 and June 23-25 at 8.)

LLOYD COLE—After disbanding his British group, the Commotions, Lloyd Cole moved to New York, grew a beard, and hooked up with some old Lou Reed alumni (guitarist Robert Quine and drummer Fred Maher). Then he went to work and recorded his best album, titled, unsurprisingly, "Lloyd Cole." In the past his songs tended to sound a bit too earnest and naïve. But now this sulky artist slumps a little less and plays a little harder. He still sings his songs with a romantic listlessness that rivals Morrissey's, but with this new material he sounds pretty cool. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. June 24 at 8.)

JOHNNY MATHIS AND JENNIFER HOLLIDAY—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. June 21-24 at 8.

THE STYLISTICS—With the Tavares, Eddie Kendricks, Dennis Edwards, and Ray, Goodman & Brown. (Beacon Theatre. June 24 at 5 and 9.)

AKIRA TANA AND RUFUS REID—Roundabout Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. June 25 at 7:30.

TRACY CHAPMAN—With Johnny Clegg & Savuka. (Beacon Theatre. June 26 at 8.)

JVC JAZZ FESTIVAL—An annual summer series, which will run through July 1. June 22: At 5, Terry Waldo (Weill Recital Hall); at 5, Roy Campbell and William Parker, and the Jazz Passengers (Equitable Auditorium, Seventh Ave. at 51st St.); at 7 and 11, Miles Davis and Hiroshima; and at 8, the Dizzy Gillespie United Nation Orchestra and the Marcus Roberts group (Carnegie Hall). . . . ¶ June 23: At 5, Tim Berne and Marilyn Crispell, and Greg Osby (Equitable Auditorium); at 5:30, Randy Weston (Weill Recital Hall); at 8, Steve Reich and Musicians and the World Saxophone Quartet (Carnegie Hall); at 8, Lee Ritenour, Patti Austin, and New York Voices (Avery Fisher Hall); and at 8, "The Judge Holds Court," an eightieth-birthday celebration for Milt Hinton, with Howard Alden, Kenny Burrell, Doc Cheatham, Jane Jarvis, Sylvia Syms, and others (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St.). . . . ¶ June 24: At 5, Jean-Paul Bourelly and Greg Lucas, and Don Byron (Equitable Auditorium); at 5:30, Sir Charles Thompson (Weill Recital Hall); at 7, George Benson, the McCoy Tyner trio, and the Michel Camilo trio (Carnegie Hall); and at 7 and 11, Ray Charles, the Raelettes, the Ray Charles Orchestra, and Robert Flack (Avery Fisher Hall). . . . ¶ June 25: At 5, Marty Napoleon (Weill Recital Hall); and at 5, Iva Bittova and Pavil Fajt, and Evan Lurie (Equitable Auditorium). . . . ¶ June 26: At 5, Mulgrew Miller (Weill Recital Hall); at 5, Andrew Cyrille and Vladimir Tarasov, and Brandon Ross (Equitable Auditorium); at 8, Mel Tormé, Cleo Laine, and John Dankworth (Carnegie Hall); at 8, Milton Nascimento and Wayne Shorter (Avery Fisher Hall); and at 8, "The Jim Hall Invitational," with Pat Metheny, Ron Carter, Gerry Mulligan, Peter Bernstein, and others (Town Hall). . . . ¶ June 27: At 5, John Lewis (Weill Recital Hall); at 5, Fred Frith and Ikue Mori, and the Gretchen Langheld Band (Equitable Auditorium); at 7, Chick Corea and Bobby McFerrin (Carnegie Hall); at 8, Pearl Bailey, Louie Bellson, and Wynton Marsalis (Avery Fisher Hall); and at 8, "An Evening of American Song," with the Gerry Mulligan quartet, Ruby Braff, Dick Hyman, and Barbara Lea (Town Hall). (The phone number for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall is 247-7800; for Avery Fisher Hall, 874-2424; and for Town Hall, 840-2824. Tickets for the concerts at the Equitable Auditorium will be available at the door on the afternoons of the performances.)

SPORTS

EACH June the P.G.A. Golf Tour pitches its tents at the Westchester Country Club, in Harrison. This summer, the dates for the Buick Classic there are June 21-24. The course, laid out in 1922 by Walter Travis, presents a very good test, but the watching can be difficult on the weekend when the crowds roll in. For those with flexible schedules, the best idea is to turn out on Thursday or Friday. There are a great many fine players to watch. Ben Crenshaw may not hit the ball as sharply as he once did, but he still reads the subtle breaks and speeds of the greens like few golfers in the game's long history. Nick Price, who was born in Durban, South Africa, and David Frost, who was born in Capetown, have made themselves into two of the soundest iron players on the tour. Fred Couples is fascinating to follow because he hits his drives with a seemingly lackadaisical swing and rips them out of sight.

HOME TEAMS

METS—Vs. the St. Louis Cardinals, June 18-19 at 7:35, and June 20 at 1:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia Phillies, June 22 at 7:35, June 23 at 7:05, and June 24 at 1:35.

YANKEES—Vs. the Milwaukee Brewers, June 26-27 at 7:30, and June 28 at 1.

(The Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; and the Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000.)

RACING

HORSES—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. . . . At Monmouth Park, Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays at 1:30. . . . At the Atlantic City Race Course: Mondays and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:25. . . . TROTTING at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:45.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

"READ TALES IN THE SUNSET"—A new summer series, presented by the Battery Park City Authority and Symphony Space, in which notable locals assemble alfresco to read poems, essays, and stories largely inspired by New York Harbor. June 19 at 6:30 (rain date, June 21): Fritz Weaver reads selections from Melville and Twain; Paul Hecht reads Jonathan Raban; and Maria Tucci reads Emily Dickinson and Margaret Atwood. . . . ¶ June 26 at 6:30 (rain date, June 28): Estelle Parsons reads excerpts from Bruce Bliven and Delmore Schwartz; Isaiah Sheffer reads from his own work; and Malachy McCourt reads William Riordan. (Battery Park City Esplanade. No tickets necessary.)

FESTIVAL—Not your run-of-the-mill event, with sausage stands and T-shirt venders. This one is a geography lesson: music and dancing from North India, Korea, the Andes, and the Soviet Union; and crafts from Cambodia, Senegal, Bolivia, and Afghanistan. (Central Park's Rumsey Playground, 72nd St. near Fifth Ave. June 23, from 1 to 7. No tickets necessary.)

GUSSIED UP—Scan the midtown skyline June 22-24 and you'll see the spire of the Empire State Building sporting lavender and white lights in honor of Gay and Lesbian Pride Week.

"MIDSUMMER NIGHT SWING"—Evenings of swing dancing by the fountain in Lincoln Plaza. Bring your favorite partner. June 23 at 9: Peter Duchin Orchestra. . . . ¶ June 27 at 9: Raul Azpiazu y Los Maniseros. (Admission at the gate on the night of the dance.)

PIER 84—June 20: TEARS FOR FEARS, with Michael Penn. . . . ¶ June 24: Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers. (Twelfth Ave. at 45th St. Evenings at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 247-4777.)

BILLY JOEL—Yankee Stadium. June 22 at 8:30. For information about tickets, call 307-7171.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 19.

Tom Cruise in "Days of Thunder"

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Jesus of Montreal" (directed by Denys Arcand; in French), with Lothaire Bluteau.
Theatre 2: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
Theatre 3: "Longtime Companion" (†).
Theatre 4: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (†).
Theatre 5: "How to Make Love to a Negro Without Getting Tired" (Jacques W. Benoit; in French), with Isaach De Bankolé.
Theatre 6: Through June 21: The 22nd International Tournée of Animation. From June 22: "RoboCop 2" (Irvin Kershner), with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
A series of formerly banned Czech films, 1963-90.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Total Recall" (†).
Theatre 2: Through June 26: "Total Recall" (†). From June 27: "Days of Thunder" (Tony Scott), with Tom Cruise.
Theatre 3: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch" (Joe Dante), with Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates, and John Glover.

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"Bird on a Wire" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Total Recall" (†).
Theatre 2: "Total Recall" (†).
Theatre 3: "Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, and Ed O'Ross.
Theatre 4: "Another 48 Hrs."
Theatre 5: Through June 26: "Another 48 Hrs." From June 27: "Days of Thunder" (Tony Scott), with Tom Cruise.
Theatre 6: Through June 21: "Cadillac Man" (†). From June 22: "RoboCop 2" (Irvin Kershner), with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Dick Tracy" (Warren Beatty), with Beatty, Madonna, Glenne Headly, Mandy Patinkin, and William Forsythe.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Bird on a Wire" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: Through June 21: "Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, Ed O'Ross, Bernie Casey, and Tisha Campbell. From June 22: "Betsy's Wedding" (Alan Alda), with Alda, Madeline Kahn, Joe Pesci, and Molly Ringwald.
Theatre 2: Through June 26: "Another 48 Hrs." From June 27: "Days of Thunder" (Tony Scott), with Tom Cruise.
Theatre 3: Through June 21: "Cadillac Man" (†). From June 22: "RoboCop 2" (Irvin Kershner), with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Back to the Future Part III" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Q & A" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch" (Joe Dante), with Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates, and John Glover.
Theatre 2: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch."

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"The War of the Roses" (Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and DeVito.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Strapless" (David Hare), with Blair Brown, Bruno Ganz, and Bridget Fonda.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "My Left Foot" (†).
Theatre 2: Through June 26: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (†). From June 27: "Days of Thunder" (Tony Scott), with Tom Cruise.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Back to the Future Part III" (†).
Theatre 2: "Back to the Future Part III" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Dick Tracy" (Warren Beatty), with Beatty, Madonna, Glenne Headly, Mandy Patinkin, and William Forsythe.
Theatre 2: Through June 21: "Pretty Woman" (†). From June 22: "The Misadventures of Mr. Wilt" (Michael Tuchner), with Mel Smith and Griff Rhys Jones.
Theatre 3: "Imported Bridegroom" (Pamela Berger), with Greta Cowan and Avi Hoffman.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Total Recall" (†).
Theatre 2: "Total Recall" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Bird on a Wire" (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, Ed O'Ross, Bernie Casey, and Tisha Campbell.
Theatre 2: Through June 21: "Another 48 Hrs." From June 22: "RoboCop 2" (Irvin Kershner), with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
Through June 21: "Monsieur Hire" (Patrice Leconte; in French), with Michel Blanc and Sandrine Bonnaire.
From June 22: "Betsy's Wedding" (Alan Alda), with Alda, Madeline Kahn, Joe Pesci, and Molly Ringwald.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Cadillac Man" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through June 26: "Back to the Future Part III" (†).
From June 27: "Days of Thunder" (Tony Scott), with Tom Cruise.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, Ed O'Ross, Bernie Casey, and Tisha Campbell.
Theatre 2: "Another 48 Hrs."

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch" (Joe Dante), with Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates, and John Glover.
Theatre 2: "Dick Tracy" (Warren Beatty), with Beatty, Madonna, Glenne Headly, Mandy Patinkin, and William Forsythe.

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema 1 and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: "Monsieur Hire" (directed by Patrice Leconte; in French), with Michel Blanc and Sandrine Bonnaire.
Theatre 2: "My Uncle's Legacy" (Krsto Papic; a Yugoslav film).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, Ed O'Ross, Bernie Casey, and Tisha Campbell.
Theatre 2: "Another 48 Hrs."

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through June 21: "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).
From June 22: "Betsy's Wedding" (Alan Alda), with Alda, Madeline Kahn, Joe Pesci, and Molly Ringwald.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Back to the Future Part III" (†).
Theatre 2: "Bird on a Wire" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Dick Tracy" (Warren Beatty), with Beatty, Madonna, Glenne Headly, Charles Durning, Mandy Patinkin, and William Forsythe.
Theatre 2: "Dick Tracy."
Theatre 3: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.
Theatre 4: "Without You I'm Nothing" (John Boskovich), with Sandra Bernhard.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Strapless" (David Hare), with Blair Brown, Bruno Ganz, and Bridget Fonda.
Theatre 2: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch" (Joe Dante), with Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates, and John Glover.
Theatre 3: "Bird on a Wire" (†).
Theatre 4: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
Theatre 6: "Longtime Companion" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Belly of an Architect" (1987, Peter Greenaway).
Theatre 8: "Back to the Future Part III" (†).
Theatre 9: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch."

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (†); and (evenings only) "Q & A" (†).
Theatre 2: "Pretty Woman" (†).
Theatre 3: "My Left Foot" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Dick Tracy" (Warren Beatty), with Beatty, Madonna, Glenne Headly, Mandy Patinkin, and William Forsythe.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "The Belly of an Architect" (Peter Greenaway).
Theatre 2: "Back to the Future Part III" (†).
Theatre 3: Through June 21: "Strapless" (David Hare), with Blair Brown, Bruno Ganz, and Bridget Fonda. From June 22: "Betsy's Wedding" (Alan Alda), with Alda, Madeline Kahn, Joe Pesci, and Molly Ringwald.
Theatre 4: (Matinées only) "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (†); and (evenings only) "My Left Foot" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
Theatre 6: "Without You I'm Nothing" (John Boskovich), with Sandra Bernhard.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St. (765-7600)
Through June 26: "Bird on a Wire" (†).
From June 27: "Days of Thunder" (Tony Scott), with Tom Cruise.

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Pretty Woman" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
Through June 21: "How to Make Love to a Negro Without Getting Tired" (Jacques W. Benoit; in French), with Isaach De Bankolé.
From June 22: "Betsy's Wedding" (Alan Alda), with Alda, Madeline Kahn, Joe Pesci, and Molly Ringwald.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Longtime Companion" (†).

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

CARNEGIE SCREENING ROOM, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)

"Too Beautiful for You" (Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Josiane Balasko, and Carole Bouquet.

PARIS, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)

"Jesus of Montreal" (Denys Arcand; in French), with Lothaire Bluteau.

CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"Henry V" (†).

LOEWS PARAMOUNT, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Cadillac Man" (†).

62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

"Pretty Woman" (†).

LINCOLN PLAZA 1, 2, AND 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).

Theatre 2: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.

Theatre 3: Through June 21: "Cinema Paradiso." From June 22: "May Fools" *(Louis Malle; in French), with Michel* Piccoli and Miou-Miou.

REGENCY, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"Bird on a Wire" (†).

LOEWS 84TH STREET SIXPLEX, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: Through June 21: "Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, Ed O'Ross, Bernie Casey, and Tisha Campbell. From June 22: "Betsy's Wedding" (Alan Alda), with Alda, Madeline Kahn, Joe Pesci, and Molly Ringwald.

Theatre 2: Through June 26: "Another 48 Hrs." From June 27: "Days of Thunder" (Tony Scott), with Tom Cruise.

Theatre 3: "Dick Tracy" (Warren Beatty), with Beatty, Madonna, Glenne Headly, Charles Durning, Mandy Patinkin, and William Forsythe.

Theatre 4: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch" (Joe Dante), with Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates, and John Glover.

Theatre 5: "Total Recall" (†).

Theatre 6: Through June 21: "Total Recall" (†). *From June 22: "RoboCop 2" (Irvin* Kershner), with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen.

METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "Back to the Future Part III" (†).

Theatre 2: "Back to the Future Part III" (†).

OLYMPIA I AND II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Q & A" (†).

Theatre 2: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Total Recall" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Guardian" (directed by William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell, Dwier Brown, and Jenny Seagrave.

Theatre 3: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch" (Joe Dante), with Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates, and John Glover.

Theatre 4: "Q & A" (†).

Theatre 5: "The Game."

Theatre 6: "Total Recall" (†).

EMBASSY 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"Dick Tracy" (Warren Beatty), with Beatty, Madonna, Glenne Headly, Charles Durning, Mandy Patinkin, and William Forsythe.

EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 2: Through June 21: "Pretty Woman" (†). From June 22: "RoboCop 2" (Irvin Kershner), with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen.

Theatre 3: Through June 21: "The First Power" (Robert Resnikoff), with Lou Diamond Phillips and Tracy Griffith. From June 22: "RoboCop 2."

Theatre 4: Through June 21: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery, Alec Baldwin, and Scott Glenn. From June 22: "RoboCop 2."

LOEWS ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, Ed O'Ross, Bernie Casey, and Tisha Campbell.

NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Back to the Future Part III" (†).

Theatre 2: "Back to the Future Part III" (†).

WARNER, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)

"Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke, Jacqueline Bisset, and Carré Otis.

WEST SIDE CINEMA 1 AND 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: "How to Make Love to a Negro Without Getting Tired" (Jacques W. Benoit), with Isaach De Bankolé.

Theatre 2: "Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer" (John McNaughton), with Michael Rooker.

REVIVAL HOUSES

BIOGRAPH CINEMA, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Through June 19: "Stella Dallas" (1937, directed by King Vidor), with Barbara Stanwyck, John Boles, and Anne Shirley; and "The Sea Wolf" (1941, Michael Curtiz), with Ida Lupino, Edward G. Robinson, and John Garfield.

June 20-21: "The Miracle Woman" (1931, Frank Capra), with Barbara Stanwyck, Sam Hardy, and David Manners; and "Little Caesar" (1930, Mervyn LeRoy), with Edward G. Robinson, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and Glenda Farrell.

June 22-23: "Sorry, Wrong Number" (1948, Anatole Litvak), with Barbara Stanwyck and Burt Lancaster; and "The Woman in the Window" (†).

June 24-25: "The Whole Town's Talking" (1935, John Ford), with Jean Arthur and Edward G. Robinson; and "The Bitter Tea of General Yen" (1933, Frank Capra), with Barbara Stanwyck, Nils Asther, Gavin Gordon, and Walter Connolly.

June 26-27: "The Gay Sisters" (1942, Irving *Rapper), with Barbara Stanwyck, George* Brent, and Geraldine Fitzgerald; and "My Reputation" (1946, Curtis Bernhardt), with Stanwyck and Brent.

CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 W. 12th. (924-3363)

Through June 19: "A Star Is Born" (1954, George Cukor), with Judy Garland, James Mason, Charles Bickford, and Jack Carson.

June 20-21: "The Honeymoon Killers" (1970, Leonard Kastle), with Shirley Stoler and Tony Lo Bianco; and "Tales from the Gimli Hospital" (1988, Guy Maddin).

June 22-23: "The Handmaid's Tale" (1990, Volker Schlöndorff), with Natasha Richardson, Faye Dunaway, Robert Duvall, and Aidan Quinn; and "A Shock to the System" (1990, Jan Egleson), with Michael Caine, Swoosie Kurtz, and Peter Riegert.

June 24: "Swing Time" (1936, George Stevens), with Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire, Helen Broderick, Victor Moore, and Betty Furness; and "Shall We Dance" (†).

June 25-26: "Rebel Without a Cause" (1955, Nicholas Ray), with James Dean, Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo, Corey Allen, and Nick Adams; and "East of Eden" (1955, Elia Kazan), with Julie Harris, Dean, Raymond Massey, and Richard Davalos.

From June 27: "The Little Mermaid" (1989, John Musker and Ron Clements), an animated film; and "The Secret of NIMH" (1982, Don Bluth), an animated film.

THALIA SOHO, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

Through June 19: "He Walked by Night" (1949, Alfred Werker), with Richard Basehart and Scott Brady; "The Chase" (1946, Arthur Ripley), with Robert Cummings, Michèle Morgan, and Peter Lorre; and "Port of New York" (1950, Laslo Benedek), with Brady and K. T. Stevens.

June 20-21: "Lord Love a Duck" (1966, George Axelrod), with Tuesday Weld and Roddy McDowall; and "Where's Poppa?" (1970, Carl Reiner), with George Segal, Ruth Gordon, Trish Van Devere, and Ron Leibman.

June 22-23: "Westler—East of the Wall" (1986, Wieland Speck); and "Fun Down There" (1987, Roger Stigliano).

June 24: "La Dolce Vita" (1960, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg.

June 25-26: Film documentaries about Raoul Walsh, Alfred Hitchcock, and Pier Paolo Pasolini.

From June 27: "Body and Soul" (1924) and "Border Line" (1925), both silent films, directed by Oscar Micheaux, with Paul Robeson.

THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

June 18: "Jean de Florette" (1985, Claude Berri; in French), with Yves Montand, Gérard Depardieu, and Elisabeth Depardieu; and "Manon of the Spring" (1987, Berri; in French), with Montand, Daniel Auteuil, and Emmanuelle Béart.

June 19: "The Awful Truth" (1937, Leo McCarey), with Irene Dunne, Cary Grant, and Ralph Bellamy; and "You Can't Take It with You" (1938, Frank Capra), with Jean Arthur, James Stewart, Lionel Barrymore, and Edward Arnold.

June 20: "Indiscretion of an American Wife" (1954, Vittorio De Sica), with Jennifer Jones and Montgomery Clift; and "Gold of Naples" (1957, De Sica; in Italian), with Sophia Loren, De Sica, Silvana Mangano, and Totò.

June 21: "Trio" (1950) and "Encore" (1951), three Somerset Maugham stories in each film.

June 22-23: "The 39 Steps" (†); and "The Lady Vanishes" (1938, Alfred Hitchcock), with Dame May Whitty, Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave, Paul Lukas, and Cecil Parker.

June 24: "The Canterbury Tales" (1972, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with Hugh Griffith, Alan Webb, and Jenny Runacre; and "The Hawks and the Sparrows" (1967, Pasolini; in Italian), with Totò and Ninetto Davoli.

June 25: "The Bicycle Thief" (1949, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian); and "Miracle in Milan" (1951, De Sica; in Italian), with Francesco Golissano, Brunella Bovo, Paolo Stoppa, and Emma Gramatica.

June 26: "A Night at the Opera" (1935) and "A Day at the Races" (1937), both directed by Sam Wood, with the Marx Brothers.

June 27: "Gothic" (1987, Ken Russell); and "The Devils" (1971, Russell), with Vanessa Redgrave and Oliver Reed.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)

THEATRE 1: June 18-19 at 2:30 and 6: Three different programs of silent films starring Stan Laurel, celebrating the hundredth anniversary of his birth. . . . ¶ June 21 at 2:30 and 6: "Parting Glances" (1986, directed by Bill Sherwood), with Richard Ganoung, John Bolger, and Steve Buscerni. . . . ¶ June 22 at 2:30: "Don't Play Us Cheap" (1972, Melvin Van Peebles), with Esther Rolle, Avon Long, and Rhetta Hughes. . . . ¶ June 22 at 6: "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song" (1971, Van Peebles), with Van Peebles, Simon Chuckster, and Hubert Scales. . . . ¶ June 23 at 2: "Watermelon Man" (1969, Van Peebles), with Godfrey Cambridge and Estelle Parsons. . . . ¶ June 23 at 5: "The Story of a Three Day Pass" (1967, Van Peebles), with Harry Baird and Nicole Berger. . . . ¶ June 24 at 2: "Sophisticated Gents" (1981, Harry Falk), with Van Peebles, Paul Winfield, Bernie Casey, and Daniel Wilson. . . . ¶ June 25 at 2:30: "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song." . . . ¶ June 25 at 6: "Identity Crisis" (1989, Van Peebles), with Mario Van Peebles, Ilan Mitchell-Smith, and Shelley Burch. Melvin and Mario Van Peebles will be present. . . . ¶ June 26 at 2:30: "Watermelon Man." . . . ¶ June 26 at 6: "Don't Play Us Cheap."

THEATRE 2: June 18 at 3: "Good Times, Wonderful Times" (1965, Lionel Rogosin), a documentary. . . . ¶ June 18 at 6: "On the Bowery" (1956, Rogosin), a documentary. . . . ¶ June 19 at 3: "Woodcutters of the Deep South" (1973, Rogosin), a documentary. . . . ¶ June 19 at 6: "Black Roots" (1970, Rogosin), a documentary. . . . ¶ June 21 at 3 and 6: "Super Companies" (1987, Boyce Richardson), a documentary. . . . ¶ June 22 at 2:30: "Black Fantasy" (1972, Rogosin), a documentary. . . . ¶ June 22 at 6: "Good Times, Wonderful Times." . . . ¶ June 23 at 2:30: "Come Back Africa" (1960, Rogosin), a documentary. . . . ¶ June 23 at 5: "On the Bowery." . . . ¶ June 24 at 2:30: "Black Roots." . . . ¶ June 24 at 5: "Black Fantasy." . . . ¶ June 25 at 3: "Woodcutters of the Deep South." . . . ¶ June 25 at 6: "Come Back Africa."

MUSEUM OF BROADCASTING, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," dramas shown on television over the past thirty years. June 19-23: Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" (1966, CBS), with Lee J. Cobb, Mildred Dunnock, and Gene Wilder. . . . From June 26: Anton Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya" (1967, NET), with Michael Redgrave, Rosemary Harris, and Laurence Olivier. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6, Wednesdays through Fridays at 3, and Saturdays at 1. . . . ¶ "The Reiner Moritz Collection." June 19-23: "From East to West: The Magic Carpet" (1986, Barrie Gavin). Showings Tuesday at 2 and 6:30 and Wednesday through Saturday at 2. . . . June 19-23: "Pierre Boulez" (1983, Gavin), a documentary. Showings Tuesday through Saturday at 3:15. . . . From June 26:

"Gesualdo the Prince" (1983, Colin Nears). Showings Tuesday at 2 and 6:30 and Wednesday through Saturday at 2. . . . From June 26: "Ralph Vaughan-Williams" (1984, Ken Russell), a documentary. Showings Tuesday through Saturday at 3:15.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Films showing in the Riklis Theatre. June 20-22 and June 27 at 2:30 and June 23-24 at 2 and 4:30: Five different programs of short comedies, 1925-35, featuring Billy Gilbert, Billy Bevan, Ben Turpin, the Three Stooges, Eddie Cantor, Fred Allen, and others.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Films showing in either the Jonas Mekas Theatre or the Maya Deren Theatre. June 20 at 7: A program of short films by George Méliès. . . . ¶ June 20 at 9: "Menilmontant" (1925, Dimitri Kirsanoff; silent) and "The Old House, Passing" (1966, Larry Jordan). . . . ¶ June 21-23 at 7 and June 24 at 3: "The Wild Child" (†). . . . ¶ June 21 and 23 at 7 and June 24 at 5: "The Long Weekend (O'Despair)" (1988, Gregg Araki). . . . ¶ June 21-23 at 9 and June 24 at 7: "Desire: Sexuality in Germany 1910-1945" (1989, Stuart Marshall). . . . ¶ June 22 at 7 and June 23-24 at 5: "Wilhelm Reich—Viva Little Man" (1987, Digne Meller Marcovicz). . . . ¶ June 22-23 at 9: "Cocksucker Blues" (1972, Robert Frank). . . . ¶ June 22-23 at 10:30 and June 24 at 7: "Death of the Gorilla" (1966, Peter Mays) and "Sister Midnight" (1974, Mays). . . . ¶ June 27 at 7: Another program of short films by Méliès. . . . ¶ June 27 at 9: Short films by George and Mike Kuchar and George Landow.

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—A program of films on which Takeo Kimura worked as art director. June 18 at 6: "Zigeunerweisen" (1980, Seijun Suzuki; in Japanese) and "The Young Rebel" (1963, Suzuki; in Japanese). . . . ¶ June 22 at 6: "The Young Rebel"; and "The Maid's Kid" (1955, Tomotaka Tasaka; in Japanese). . . . ¶ June 25 at 6: "The Maid's Kid"; and "Wild Geese" (1953, Shiro Toyoda; in Japanese).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—June 27 at 12:30 and 6: "French Cancan" (1954, Jean Renoir; in French), with Jean Gabin, Françoise Arnoul, Maria Felix, and Dora Doll. . . . ¶ June 27 at 3:15 and 8:45: "Moulin Rouge" (1952, John Huston), with José Ferrer, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Suzanne Flon, and Colette Marchand.

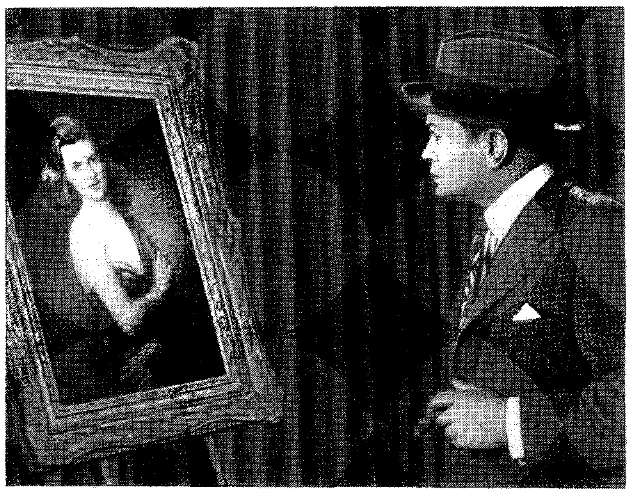
WHITNEY MUSEUM, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Two films by Bill Gunn: "Ganja and Hess" (1973), June 19 at 2 and 6 and June 21, 23, and 26 at 2. . . . ¶ "Personal Problems" (1982), June 20 and 22 at noon and June 24 at 1.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (570-3949)—June 22 at 7: "Anna Christie" (1930, Clarence Brown), with Greta Garbo, Charles Bickford, and Marie Dressler. . . . ¶ June 23 at 7: "Ocean's Eleven" (1960, Lewis Milestone), with Frank Sinatra, Peter Lawford, Sammy Davis, Jr., Richard Conte, Dean Martin, and Angie Dickinson.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL, JR., STATE OFFICE BUILDING, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—June 18 at 6: "The Spook Who Sat by the Door" (1973, Ivan Dixon), with Lawrence Cooke, Paula Kelly, and Janet League; and "The Battle of Algiers" (1966, Gillo Pontecorvo). . . . ¶ June 19 at 6: "Cry Freedom" (1987, Richard Attenborough), with Denzel Washington and Kevin Kline; and "Place of Weeping" (1988, Darrel Roodt), with James Shyle. . . . ¶ June 20 at 6: "A Dry White Season" (1989, Euzhan Palcy), with Zakes Mokae, Donald Sutherland, Jurgen Prochnow, and Marlon Brando; and "Place of Weeping." . . . ¶ June 23 at 1 and 5: "Fields of Endless Day" (1978, Terence McCarthey-Filgate), with Lili Clark; "Slavers" (1978, Jurgen Goslar), with Ken Gampu, Britt Ekland, and Trevor Howard; and "Come Back Africa" (1960, Lionel Rogosin), a documentary. . . . ¶ June 23 at 8: "The Spook Who Sat by the Door"; and "The Final Comedown" (1973, Oscar Williams), with Billy Dee Williams. . . . ¶ June 25 at noon and 8: "Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary," a documentary; "The Spook Who Sat by the Door"; and "Black and Blue" (1987, Lamar Williams), a documentary.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.



Edward G. Robinson in "The Woman in the Window"

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

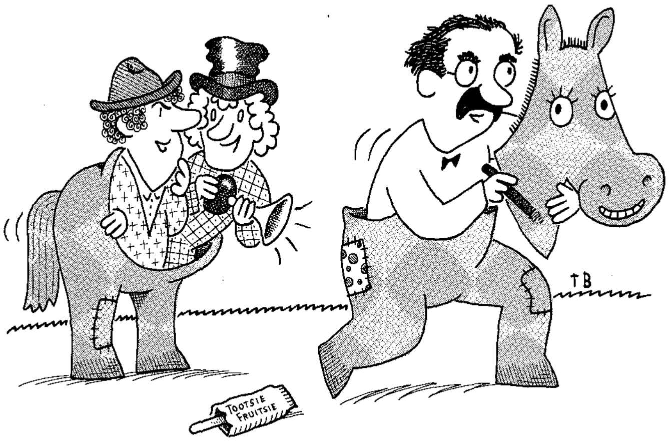
BACK TO THE FUTURE PART III—The last installment of the "Back to the Future" series brings the story of the suburban kid Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) and the mad inventor Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd) to a graceful, almost leisurely conclusion. Most of the picture takes place in 1885, in the Old West, where the specially rigged DeLorean that has been whipping Marty and Doc back and forth in time runs out of gas. Stalled in a Western, these time travellers from the manic, jumped-up nineteen-eighties adjust their internal clocks and do what characters in Westerns do: they wait. The movie settles into a deliberate and rather soothing rhythm, as if the filmmakers—director Robert Zemeckis and writer Bob Gale—knew there was no point in getting themselves, and us, all het up. The relaxing light-vaudeville mood is a welcome break from the strenuous time-hopping of the first two installments. (It's poky, and it's also a touch boring.) While Zemeckis and Gale are biding their time, setting things up for their frantic grand finale, they keep us amused with an eccentric romance between Doc and a schoolmarm played by Mary Steenburgen. Lloyd and Steenburgen are hilariously well matched—they have perfectly compatible styles of celestial goofiness—and their moonbeam love story is the movie's one true inspiration. Also with Thomas F. Wilson.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/18/90.) (34th St. East, Baronet, Coronet, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin. . . . ¶ U. A. East; through June 26.)

BIRD ON A WIRE—Goldie Hawn being crushingly cute.—P.K. (Bijou Cinema, Bay Cinema, Beekman, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency. . . . ¶ Ziegfeld; through June 26.)

CADILLAC MAN—This shaggy comedy about a Queens auto salesman is full of small, accidental-seeming pleasures—the joys of resourcefulness. It's a movie of bits and pieces, a patchwork of motions and wayward inspirations, and it probably shouldn't work at all. But it's more than funny enough to wear down our resistance. The screenwriter, Ken Friedman, has peopled his story with more than a dozen vivid characters, and the director, Roger Donaldson, has given the actors plenty of room; everyone in this movie makes an impression. As the salesman, Joey O'Brien, Robin Williams is brilliant throughout, and he's surrounded by strong actors in sharply written roles—each one gives him something different to react to. Joey, whose passions are sex and selling, has an ex-wife, a teen-age daughter, and two girlfriends; he owes twenty thousand dollars to a mobster; and he's in danger of losing his job. Fran Drescher is hilarious as one of the girlfriends, Joy: she combines sexy wheedling and flat-out nagging in a completely original way. And Pamela Reed, as Joey's ex-wife, is splendid. Funniest of all is Tim Robbins, who plays Larry, the jealous husband of the dealership's receptionist (Annabella Sciorra); halfway through the picture, he drives his motorcycle through the showroom's plate-glass window and takes everyone hostage. Robbins' acting is explosive—totally unpredictable; watching the way he moves and listening to how he reads his lines, we keep asking ourselves, "Where did *that* come from?" Wherever this performance comes from, it's sensational. Also with Lori Petty, Paul Guilfoyle, Zack Norman, Lauren Tom, and Elaine Stritch.—T.R. (6/4/90) (Loews Tower East, and Loews Paramount. . . . ¶ Loews 19th Street East 6, and Loews 34th Street Showplace; through June 21.)

THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE & HER LOVER—A movie about a crude British thug, Albert Spica (Michael Gambon), whose favorite method of terrorizing people is ramming things down their throats. Albert himself eats only haute cuisine; he and his wife (Helen Mirren) dine every night at a posh restaurant called Le Hollandais. This is an Art Movie, refined and terribly formal; the director, Peter Greenaway (who also wrote the script), places this barbarian smack in the middle of "painterly" compositions and encourages us to see him as a steaming hunk of offal desecrating the beauty of an artist's creation. He looks at Albert with the disdainful stare that the pukka sahib directs at a servant who has inconvenienced him. Greenaway, however, has a lot more in common with his loutish protagonist than he thinks. He obviously regards himself as an aesthetic virtuoso, but he's just a cultural omnivore. (He chews with his mouth open—we can identify almost every piece of art that has fed his imagination.) The only thing in this movie's tidy, hermetic universe that Greenaway is unable to control, or disguise with fancy brushwork, is his loathing of the body. The movie features several gross-out scenes, including a climactic act of cannibalism; the Motion Picture Association of America gave it an X rating. (The distributors released it unrated.) What's offensive about the picture, though, isn't its violence or its visceral shocks but the patrician arrogance, the smug aestheticism, the snobbishness that suffuse every frame. Greenaway is an intellectual bully: he pushes us to the ground and kicks art in our faces. Also with Alan Howard (the Lover) and Richard Bohringer (the Cook). Cinematography by Sacha Vierny.—T.R. (5/7/90) (Angelika Film Center, 59th Street East Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

HENRY V—Adapted and directed by its young star, Kenneth Branagh, this fast-paced version isn't exultant, like the one made forty-five years earlier by Laurence Olivier. Branagh emphasizes the price paid for war: the bloodshed. And, in keeping with his generation's supposed disillusion with war, he minimizes the play's glorification of the English fighting man. His conception of how to film the play is to look closely at the conniving, the misgivings, the ego wars. (This epic noir doesn't indicate why the French lost at Agincourt.) Branagh is not an overnight great moviemaker; his attempts at spectacular effects strain his inventiveness. But as an actor he has something of James Cagney's confident Irishness; he's intensely likable, with a beautiful, expressive voice and a straightforwardness that drives the whole film ahead. He and the other performers are so up that you feel their pride in working on true dramatic poetry. It's a company of stars: Paul Scofield as the melancholy French king



At Theatre 80 St. Marks, the Marx Brothers in "A Day at the Races"

whose face foretells the doom of his army, Christopher Ravenscroft as the herald Mountjoy, Derek Jacobi as the Chorus, Judi Dench as Mistress Quickly, Robbie Coltrane as Falstaff, Richard Briers as Bardolph, Richard Easton as the Constable of France, Alec McCowen as Ely, Robert Stephens as Pistol, Emma Thompson as Katherine, Geraldine McEwan as Alice, Christian Bale as Falstaff's boy, and, best of all, perhaps, Ian Holm as the chattering Welshman Fluellen.—P.K. (11/27/89) (Cinema 3.)

Last Exit to Brooklyn—A reverent, lugubrious adaptation of the famous 1965 book by Hubert Selby, Jr. Selby's stories about dead-end lives in a working-class Brooklyn neighborhood were presented in the book as discrete vignettes of urban alienation, linked only by their common air of desperation and the nervous bebop rhythms of the prose. The screenwriter, Desmond Nakano, and the director, Uli Edel, have done a cut-and-paste job on the material, so all the sad tales now unfold simultaneously. The movie jumps from one unhappy character to another as they proceed toward their climactic martyrdoms, low-life Christ figures racing each other up Calvary. And although the picture uses Brooklyn locations, it rarely looks as if it were taking place in America: the filmmakers seem to have missed their exit and wound up in some never-never land of romanticized wretchedness—a disenchanted forest. Most of the actors are ground down by the film's maudlin, heavy spirit; only Jennifer Jason Leigh, as a young streetwalker, and Jerry Orbach, in the small role of a union leader, manage to resemble actual human beings. Also with Stephen Lang, Burt Young, and Alexis Arquette.—T.R. (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, and Olympia. . . . ¶ Manhattan Twin; through June 26.)

Longtime Companion—The screenwriter, Craig Lucas, and the director, Norman René, track the effects of AIDS on the lives of eight people: seven gay men and a straight woman who is a lifelong friend of one of the men. The filmmakers focus on one day in each year of the epidemic, from 1981 through 1989, and the mournful progress of the decade is expressed by the gaps between the annual episodes: the cast of characters keeps getting smaller, and at the end only the woman and three of the men are left. The movie is sometimes very effective, but it's often blander and more simplistic than it should be. It seems determined to convey a wholesome, "normal" image of gay life to straight America—so all its characters are pleasant and good-looking, and they're all white, too. The only really interesting characters are a middle-aged couple, David (Bruce Davison) and Sean (Mark Lamos). The natural protagonist of the drama is David, who, when Sean gets sick, cares for him with extraordinary patience and tenderness. Davison's performance (in probably the best role he has ever had) is wonderfully dry and precise. There's a strange reserve in his demeanor even when he's being goofy, so the strength he shows at the bedside of his dying lover is both heartbreaking and absolutely convincing. It's a well-written role, and Davison does a beautiful piece of acting. After he, too, disappears—between episodes—the movie seems to have lost the best part of itself. Also with Campbell Scott, Stephen Caffrey, Patrick Cassidy, Mary-Louise Parker, John Dossett, and Dermot Mulroney.—T.R. (5/21/90) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

My Left Foot—The greatness of Daniel Day-Lewis's performance as the Dubliner Christy Brown, a victim of cerebral palsy who became a painter and a writer, is that he pulls you inside Christy's frustration and rage (and his bottomless thirst). There's nothing soft or maudlin about this movie's view of Christy: he's anguished and locked in, yet excitingly insolent. The movie may tear you apart, but it's the story of a triumphantly tough guy who lived it up, and Day-Lewis's interpretation has some of the sexual seductiveness that was so startling in Olivier's Richard III. This is the first film of the Irish playwright-director Jim Sheridan, who wrote the superb screenplay with another Irish playwright, Shane Connaughton. With Brenda Fricker, Ray McAnally, Fiona Shaw, Ruth McCabe, and Hugh O'Conor playing Christy as a child.—P.K. (10/2/89) (Manhattan Twin, and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas. Evenings only.)

Pretty Woman—The lovers in this romantic comedy, directed by Garry Marshall, are a long-legged, golden-hearted Hollywood Boulevard hooker (Julia Roberts) and a cold, suave corporate raider (Richard Gere). He buys her tasteful (expensive) clothes and shows her how to act "classy"; she opens—in order—his wallet, his fly, and his heart. The only real distinction of this long and rather uneventful diversion is the radical contrast between the stars' performing styles. Roberts is all ebullience and scattershot charm. The kind word for Gere's style is minimal. He's opaque, stubbornly remote; he seems to have faxed his performance in. At its worst, the movie is just unimaginative; at its best, it's pleasant and competent. It's business-as-usual entertainment. Also with Jason Alexander, Laura San Giacomo, Ralph Bellamy, and Hector Elizondo. The screenplay is by J. F. Lawton.—T.R. (23rd St. West Triplex, Festival, and 62nd & Broadway. . . . ¶ Cinema II, and Embassy; through June 21.)

Q & A—Sidney Lumet has made some exciting, dramatic New York movies ("Serpico," "Dog Day Afternoon"). He also made the hard-to-sit-through "Prince of the City," a murky indictment of big-city graft, which he co-scripted. This is in the same mode: it's about the city's ethnic humor and anger, and about police corruption. Lumet wrote the script alone, and he's so busy laying on the rancorous, bantering atmosphere that he waits too long to get to the plot: the movie becomes torpid. (You have to concentrate to figure out what's supposed to be going on—that's the only suspense.) Nick Nolte, in dark hair that makes him look like a vampire, is a big, bulky Irish cop with a vicious streak; a repressed homosexual, he especially enjoys intimidating and murdering transvestites. The co-star is Timothy Hutton as an assistant D.A., also Irish, who's expected to cover up one of the cop's killings. But the standout performance is given by Luis Guzman as a Hispanic police detective who's pressured to be "dirty." Also with Patrick O'Neal, Armand Assante, Lee Richardson, Charles Dutton, and Jenny Lumet. Based on the book by Edwin Torres.—P.K. (Eastside Cinema, Olympia, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex. Evenings only.)

Shall We Dance (1937)—The script wobbles, but this seventh Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers film has some beautiful dances and a great score by the Gershwins ("Slap That Bass," "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," "They Can't Take That Away from Me," "They All Laughed"). With Edward Everett Horton, Jerome Cowan, and Eric Blore. Directed by Mark Sandrich.—P.K. (Cinema Village; June 24.)

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles—A tacky, lighthearted parody of crime-wave movies—camp for kiddies. As babies, the four turtles were let loose in radioactive muck; they mutated into hip, English-speaking pizza-size turtles who live in the dark sewers of New York City and send out for pizza. Their mentor, the wise old rat Splinter, has trained them in the martial arts, and they fight the criminal legions led by the Japanese, Darth Vader-like Shredder. Their human friends are the TV newswoman April O'Neil (Judith Hoag) and the daredevil Casey Jones (Elias Koteas). Everything in the movie has a playful, pop familiarity, and the jokey allusions to other movies are easy for young kids to grasp. The four turtles (stuntmen in getups devised by Jim Henson's Creature Shop) are not as individualized as one might hope, but Splinter has an Alice-in-Wonderland creepiness. The director, Steve Barron, is casual with Hoag and Koteas, who blend in gracefully; he can't do much for the preachy subplot involving a father and son who misunderstand each other. (The flashbacks are the most fun.) The story is based on the comic-book characters devised in 1983 by Peter Laird and Kevin Eastman.—P.K. (23rd St. West Triplex, and Worldwide Cinemas. Matinées only.)

The 39 Steps (1935)—At the time, Alfred Hitchcock explained the point of view behind the picture: "I am out to give the public good, healthy, mental shake-ups. Civilization has become so screening and sheltering that we cannot experience sufficient thrills at first hand. Therefore, to prevent our becoming sluggish and jellified, we have to experience them artificially." What fun to make a movie in an era when people still needed a bit of a jolt! Even now, Hitchcock's little jolts are more surprising than most of the shocks engineered to stun modern audiences. This suave, amusing spy melodrama is directed with so sure a touch that the suspense is charged with wit; it's one of the three or four best things Hitchcock ever did. The lead, Robert Donat, was that rarity among English actors: a performer with both personal warmth and professional skill. The heroine is Madeleine Carroll. Hitchcock paired them off by the mischievous use of a gimmick: a man and a woman who detest each other are handcuffed together; as day wears into night, they fall in love. The movie thus contains an extra—implicit, as it were—element of bathroom-humor suspense. Among Hitchcock's other pleasing perversities was the casting of Godfrey Tearle, who looked astonishingly like Franklin Delano Roosevelt, as the chief enemy agent. The film also has one of his rare emotionally felt sequences: the brief, chilling scenes between Peggy Ashcroft and John Laurie as a mismated couple joined together by real chains. John Buchan's novel was adapted by Charles Bennett, Ian Hay, and Alma Reville.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; June 22-23.)

Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!—Pedro Almodóvar's new movie gets off to a fast start, like a windup toy, but it runs out of momentum early, and Almodóvar can't figure out how to start it up again. The story, about a released mental patient (Antonio Banderas) who follows a sexy actress (Victoria Abril) and then takes her prisoner, seems to tie the director's wild imagination down, and his efforts to keep his (and the audience's) blood circulating betray some desperation. Neither the kidnapper's romantic obsession nor his captive's eventual love for him is especially convincing. And we don't fully enjoy the perverse humor of the situation, either: we've seen the victim subdued by a hard slap, and that image is too strong to forget. The limpness of "Tie Me Up!" suggests that Almodóvar is either a confused director or a tired one—probably a bit of both. It's as if he had made the movie solely to satisfy the public's demand for a new Almodóvar film. Also with Francisco Rabal, Loles Leon, and Lola Cardona. Screenplay by Almodóvar. In Spanish.—T.R. (5/7/90) (Lincoln Plaza. . . . ¶ 8th St. Playhouse; through June 21.)

Total Recall—This fifty-million-dollar science-fiction thriller is full of relentless action and spectacular effects, and it's no fun at all. It's as heavy-spirited as its star, Arnold Schwarzenegger: imposing and implacable, like the killer robot Arnold played (or embodied) in "The Terminator." The script, by Ronald Shusett, Dan O'Bannon, and Gary Goldman, is based on a story by Philip K. Dick; the plot keeps twisting and turning, but we stop following it before the picture is half over. It's just a frame for meaty action sequences—a skeleton nestled deep inside ballooning muscles. The director, Paul Verhoeven ("RoboCop"), composes striking images, but they're oppressive and completely impersonal: every weird angle, every close-up of a face contorted with pain, every splash of bright-red blood is an effect borrowed from horror comics. He's awfully good at staging scenes in which people scream "Arrrgggh!" as they're being impaled or dismembered. The picture itself is a terminator: when it's over, you feel as if the life had been pounded out of you, and you never want to go to the movies again. Also with Sharon Stone, Ronny Cox, and Rachel Ticotin. Cinematography by Jost Vacano.—T.R. (6/18/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW (1944)—One of the best of Fritz Lang's American movies—a thriller with the logic and plausibility of a nightmare. Lang's technique is so sure and so seductive that the viewer completely identifies with the safe, serene protagonist (Edward G. Robinson), an associate professor of psychology in a New York City college, and shares his shock and fear when he's caught in a trap. The professor is interested in the relation of motive to homicide—an interest that's purely a matter of intellectual curiosity. Then, when his wife and child are out of town, he visits a woman's apartment; her lover comes in and unexpectedly attacks him, and he kills the intruder with a pair of scissors. Joan Bennett is the woman in the case, Dan Duryea is a blackmailer, and Raymond Massey is an assistant district attorney. Nunnally Johnson produced, and adapted J. H. Wallis's novel "Once Off Guard." With Dorothy Peterson and Bobby (later Robert) Blake.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; June 22-23.)

When François Truffaut made his 1970 movie about the Wild Child of Aveyron (captured by huntsmen in 1798), he tried to preserve "the authenticity of the source material." It was as if, having obliterated rigid notions of fictional form in early classics such as "Jules and Jim," he yearned for the straightforward approach of historical accounts—in this case, the writings of the Wild Child's mentor, Dr. Jean Itard. Truffaut himself played Itard, directing the marvellously expressive Gypsy boy Jean-Pierre Cargol (in the title role) both behind and in front of the camera. The results are bracing.

According to Truffaut, the story's strength is that everything the child does in the film "he does for the first time"—he even "sneezes for the first time, and sheds his first tears." The triumph of "The Wild Child" (playing June 21-24 at Anthology Film Archives) is that everything is a new experience for the audience, too. In style and spirit, Truffaut's movie adheres to Itard's rationalism. Yet the simplicity of the storytelling, and the limpidity of Nestor Almendros's black-and-white cinematography, enhance the mystery of the Wild Child. There's something primal about the child on all fours, moaning with joy, as he bounces back and forth in the rain—something beyond cause and effect, beyond words. Truffaut expresses the feral pull and the euphoria of nature, as well as the mental, emotional, and moral stimulation of Itard's teachings. "The Wild Child" is one of the most passionate, tough-minded accounts on film of the healing powers of civilization.

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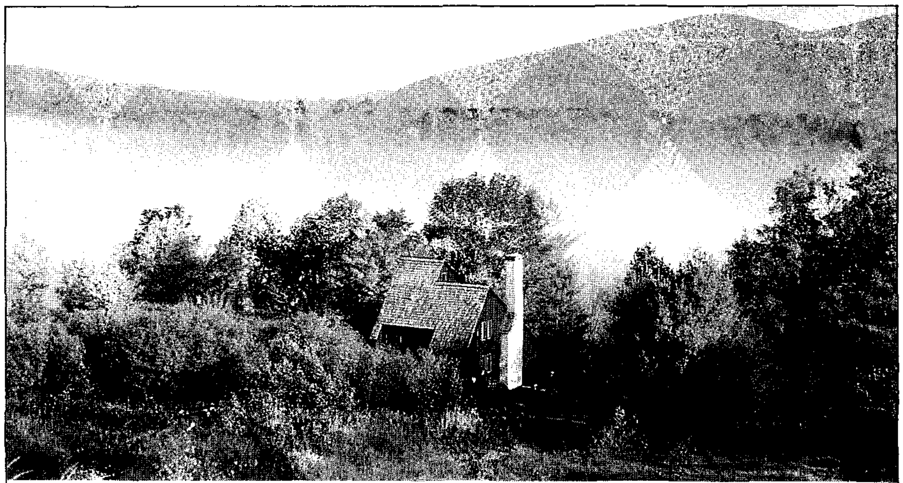
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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

A FRIEND writes:

I called up my son after breakfast this morning to wish him Happy Birthday and got a woman's recorded voice saying the number had been temporarily disconnected. She said, "No further information is available about this number," and further information was exactly what I wanted: where is he, and why hasn't he paid the phone bill? I tried again a little later and again after that. The woman's voice was warm but authoritative, and when she recited his phone number you could almost not hear that the digits had been separately recorded and computer-programmed. She sounded like someone who might have raised a few boys of her own.

My son lives a thousand miles away, in a university town, where he takes an occasional course and plays mean guitar in a rock-and-roll band. He turned twenty-one today. One morning last month, riding his bicycle at top speed down a steep hill to his humanities class, he had to swerve to avoid a car that suddenly pulled out in front of him. He aimed for the sidewalk, jumped the curb, and tried to avoid a low concrete planter but could not. He flew over the handlebars and hit the ground head first, arms outstretched, and rolled, and landed sitting up. His right arm was broken in two places. He got up and climbed on the bike and pedalled a couple of miles to a hospital and had the arm set and put in a cast. This he told me over the phone last week, before the company's accounting caught up with him.

Most of my friends are people with kids around his age, and we are circumspect in telling each other about them. One of the kids is at Oxford studying Greek, a college grad with honors at the age of eighteen, and his parents have the decency not to volunteer too much about him except to say that they miss him. I'm sure he is blazing away brightly. Some of the kids seem a little lost, troubled, marking time, and I don't inquire about them, not wanting to darken a perfectly nice dinner party with big damp clods of parental guilt. When they ask about mine, I say that he's doing fine, playing music, going to the university. (Is taking one course considered "going" to the university?) I do not say how much I worry about him. Even when his phone is disconnected, I keep dialling the number.

Twenty-one seemed like the magical gateway when I was that age, in 1963—the drinking and voting age—but in retrospect the gateway year was when I was twenty-seven, and my son was born, my first child. We were graduate students, his mother and I, and he was born at the university hospital, delivered by a student doctor who hadn't yet learned to project self-assurance. The sight of a nervous young doctor unnerved me completely, so that I had to leave during labor, and walk around the campus and try to pull myself together. I was sure that medicine was about to let us down. It was after midnight. A tavern on the corner was open, and a few customers leaned around outside; those male voices with a fraternal honk to them—loud blats of guy talk, dumb laughter—were unbearable to me in my grief at the imminent loss of my firstborn. (Being an English major, I was prepared for tragedy.) I walked across the dark practice field, past the stadium and the old turreted armory, thinking "When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd" and "Because I could not stop for Death," and around by the library, where a few lights burned and a few customers lingered on the steps, girls in plaid skirts hugging their knees, boys stretched out, talking quietly, urgently. I had a dumb urge to stop and say, "My wife is having a baby right now," a profound truth, and then I hiked back to the hospital, where, an hour later, my son emerged, handsome, bright-eyed, a little bruised.

That evening, twenty-one years ago today, still shines as one of the several straight-on, dead-center, right and true times of my life, definitely in the downtown of my heart, and when I want to locate my son in my life I think about that walk around the campus in the dark and the return to the hospital, and there he is: my child, somebody in my life more precious than I am.

ANCIENT
PLAYGROUND

When telephone contact

is lost, I can also locate him in my computer, where he's been writing stuff since he was fourteen. There's an old book report with classy lines that only a parent would dote on ("The author's choice of a first-person objective narrative format for this story is particularly effective, giving the reader space to interpret the greater significance of his experiences through the honest perceptive words of a child"), and a term paper on AIDS in which the word "semen" leaps out at me, and a long poem called "Questions," which begins:

> where am i going where have i been
> where are you going
> where have you been where am i
> going where have i been
> WE'VE BEEN HERE, THERE AND
> EVERYWHERE.

And there are the tapes he's given me, old basement tapes of his high-school band: the hour-long jam sessions that I used to hear through the heating system—hot Jimi Hendrix-style licks with a nasty buzz to them, drumming that sounds like a man breaking plates. I used to sit upstairs and seethe, and now the same music makes me sentimental, my son shouting over his guitar:

> There's freedom inside your head
> But you reach out for the lies you're fed,
> The world corrodes before your eyes,
> But you just don't seem to mind.

In his father's head there is no freedom so long as the son is disconnected in the telephone darkness. I think about him all day. Later, dialling his number for the tenth time, instead of the woman's voice I hear his phone ring, and he answers. "It was the phone company's problem," he explains, his mouth full of what sounds like celery. He says that an orthopedic surgeon looked at X-rays of the arm and thought that, with the break so close to the elbow, the arm would lose flexibility if it spent six weeks in a cast, so he recommended using a sling. No lifting, no sports, only some light stretching exercises. "My wrist is a little sore when I play guitar, but it's not bad if I use a flatpick," he says. He got a pair of Roller Blades for his birthday, he says, and he is in a hurry to get over to the park and try them out.

"Please," I say. "Don't go roller-skating. You just broke your arm. Please don't."

There are two beats of silence.

"Just kidding," he says. "I thought that'd get you going."

•

AND another friend writes:

I am a frequenter of old cemeteries, enjoying their tranquil beauty and what Emily Dickinson called their "marble stories," and the other weekend, when I was down in Southampton, I paid a visit to its North End Graveyard. North End, the second-oldest cemetery in that venerable village, had its first burial in 1717 and, in the peculiar jargon of the trade, was "abandoned" in 1940. It is a small cemetery, of hardly more than a couple of acres, and containing perhaps two hundred graves, but as I strolled under its pines and cedars among the wandering rows of weathered headstones I found a plenitude of stories: "Died at sea." "Died in California in 1851." "Served in the Union Army/ in the war of the Rebellion." There were the pathetic commonplaces of those distant times: "Æ three months, three days." "Aged one year/ Seven months & eight Ds." "Æ six mo., eleven dys." And there were the beloved wives: "Æ twenty yrs." "Æ twenty-two." "Æ twenty-seven yrs., *nine mo.*"

But then I became aware of something less expected: "Hervey Sayre/ Died/ March 23, 1880/ Æ 83 ys. & 4 mo." "David White/ Died/ Nov. 16, 1866/ Æ 95 yrs., 10 mo." "Robert Woodburn/ 1824-1908/ Jane Oakes/ His wife/ 1828-1916." "Ephraim Hildreth/ He dy'd Jan. 16, 1771/ in the 83rd yr. of his age." "Merritt Culver/ Died/ Sept. 15, 1879/ 83 yrs. & 11 mo." "Gamaliel Marshall/ Died/ June 16, 1837/ Aged 69 years." "Fannie E. Parker/ 1846-1933." "James M. Laing/ May 13, 1834/ Dec. 9, 1924." And there were more, many more, of the same. I sat down on an accommodating marker ("Æ 78") and wondered. It was painfully easy to understand the deaths of those infants and the somehow even sadder deaths of those young women—young mothers, most probably, and victims of a then almost endemic puerperal fever. But the others? I wondered how one could account for so many survivals into the later seventies, into the eighties, even into the middle nineties. Those old farmers and fishermen and shopkeepers and housewives lived out their long lives without the death-defying medications and surgical interventions that are the triumph of late-twentieth-century medicine. What gave them that strength and stamina?

It seems probable that many of the men used tobacco in some form—in a pipe, in a cigar, as a chew. (For most, the cigarette was yet to come.) They used alcohol. They drank beer and rum and maybe whiskey, and, very probably, not all of them always in what we would today call moderation. What else? There is ample evidence that both men and women ate well—off the land and out of the sea. Well and abundantly. They ate meat and potatoes. The meat was bacon and ham and sausage and chicken and beefsteak, and they ate it fried in lard. Potatoes were usually fried, and served with fried onions. They ate fresh fish (fried) and shellfish when the weather permitted, and at other times they ate salt cod and smoked eel. They drank whole milk and used plenty of heavy cream and butter and eggs and cheese. They ate the local fruits and vegetables in their natural season. They shot and ate migrating ducks and grouse in fall and spring. They ate pancakes and johnnycake and samp and doughnuts and plenty of rye bread (made of stone-ground flour) and biscuits and pies and cakes and cookies, all baked with lard. Oranges and lemons were luxuries, and grapefruit was still in the future. Oats were something they fed to their horses. They drank well water. It was plain fare, simple fare, and probably a bit monotonous. It was also a diet that the National Institutes of Health, the American Heart Association, and the American Cancer Society would consider not much short of toxic. So what was different? One thing came immediately to mind. These were for the most part men and women who worked with their hands; their work was physical labor. Even the shopkeepers cut firewood, dug gardens. And they all walked.

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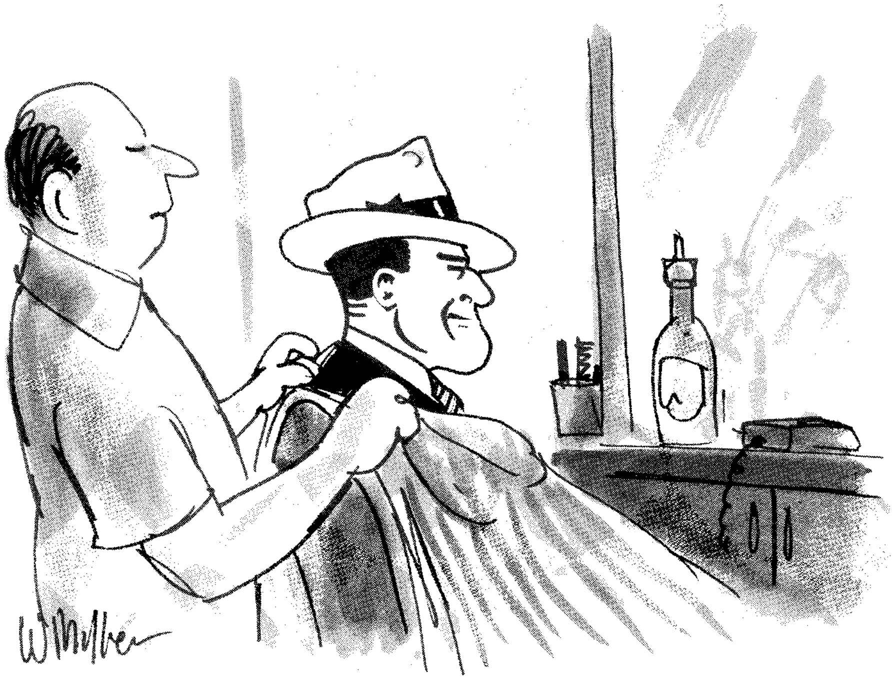

"The usual, Al. Just sharpen the nose and hone the chin."

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Heads Up

ALLIUM SATIVUM, commonly known as garlic, has not always enjoyed a kind reputation on these shores; a lot of people still associate it exclusively with bad breath and vampires. That's bound to change, though, now that garlic has its first queen. She is Jane Brody, personal-health columnist for the *Times*, and the author of "Jane Brody's Good Food Book," which contains her famous recipe for forty-clove garlic chicken. ("This dish is delicious and delicately flavored. The long, slow cooking tames the garlic into a vegetable while preserving its flavor and most of its health benefits.") A few Sundays ago, we attended her coronation, at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, which had scheduled the event as the highlight of its first-ever Garlic Day. The Queen-elect arrived promptly at one-fifteen for a brief tour of an outdoor exhibition that consisted of garlic plants, T-shirts advising "Cultivate a Scent of Excellence," various periodicals and handouts about garlic, and Alan Harding, the chef of Manhattan's Nosmo King restaurant, ladling up free samples of his garlic soup and garlic chutney. Ms. Brody wore a white jumpsuit with a wide red belt, and red high heels, thereby bringing together the colors of the two kinds of garlic one finds in the market—the white "softneck" and the red "topset" (or "hardneck"). "Hi," she said to a bystander. "I'm Jane Brody. Put some garlic in a woman's bed, and if she wakes up reeking, you know she's fertile."

Ms. Brody ran over to Chef Harding, tossed back a sample of his soup, pronounced it delicious, then took a few moments to speak with us. "I don't just proclaim the virtues of garlic," she said. "I live them. Garlic is truly a health aid. It lowers cholesterol, triglycerides, and blood pressure. It helps to control blood sugar. It was used as an infection fighter in one of the World Wars. They crushed it up and wrapped it in the wounds."

We were joined by David Stern, a founder and director of the Garlic Seed Foundation of New York State, the owner of the Rose Valley Farm, and the featured lecturer at Garlic Day. He said, "It was the First World War," and he added, "Scientists are looking at the selenium content of garlic in connection with the treatment of breast cancer. Garlic has also killed the polio virus in labs."

Ms. Brody went on, "It's an anticancer substance in mice. Of course, it can help ward off your enemies—just feed it to your friends. Since Hippocrates, we've known that the best defense against garlic breath is for everyone to eat it at once. I just gave a party for twenty people in which I used three large full heads of garlic. Remember, everybody has to eat it, because mouthwashes don't really help. The garlic works its way out of your system partly through your skin, and that can take a day."

She returned to Chef Harding's table. "Let me show you how to peel garlic," she said. "You take a knife. I don't see one here, so I'll just use this stone. Pretend it's the knife. You put the flat surface of the blade on top of a garlic clove, hold the handle with one hand, and hit the blade with the other. See, the skin pops right off."

Chef Harding added, "Or, if you have twenty pounds of garlic to peel, you have the dishwasher do it."

It was time for Ms. Brody to don her royal attire, so she excused herself for a few minutes. While waiting, we studied the Winter, 1990, issue of *The Garlic Press*, which is the newsletter of the Garlic Seed Foundation. We found articles with such headings as "The USDA-ARS Allium Research Programs," "Garlic Doesn't Need Much Fertilizer," and "Jesus Lived in Japan, Village Legend Maintains." ("Jesus Christ's direct descendant is a garlic farmer living in northeast Japan, or so residents in this isolated village say," that one began.) We also found a letter to the editor from Ted Maczka, which contained several garlic tips. To keep your feet warm in the winter, Mr. Maczka recommends chopping two cloves of garlic and wearing them in your socks. Another tip from Mr. Maczka: to maintain the air quality indoors, don't leave the socks in the house.

Before long, we heard a voice saying loudly, "Here she is, Ms. Jane Brody, Garlic Queen." Ms. Brody stepped onto the balcony of the Administration Building, directly in front of us. She still wore her jumpsuit and heels, but over them she had fastened a floor-length cloak of what appeared to be red velvet edged in white ermine. She also wore earrings made of garlic cloves and a bonnet of garlic cloves and roses. Cemented in a bucket next to her stood a tall wooden lance around which heads of garlic had been intricately woven. Suddenly, a male figure in a black cape, a black cat-burglar suit with white lace at the throat, and Dracula teeth dashed up one of two curving staircases leading to the balcony. "Oooh!" murmured the crowd below. The Queen seized the lance with both hands and brandished it. "Back!" she commanded. "Yaaay!" yelled the crowd as the villain ran into the building. Ms. Brody smiled broadly, leaned down, and snatched up several heads of garlic from a basket at her feet. She started lobbing them toward the crowd. "You've got to promise, all of you who like garlic, to catch these and use them," she said into a small microphone she had picked up with her free hand. "Those of you living on mushy oat bran, this is much better," she went on. "Oops, I think we need some lessons from the Brooklyn Dodgers. Did you know that garlic is a licensed drug in Japan? How much garlic can I throw? As much as you can stand. There are garlic pills and there is garlic juice. Let's say you want to use garlic in a salad dressing. Take an unpeeled clove and cook it for five minutes. It will work in the microwave. I do an eggplant dish."

A member of the crowd shouted up to her, "I've heard that garlic is good for calming an active dog!"

Ms. Brody reached down for more garlic heads, stood up, and resumed pitching. "It's good to *worm* a dog," she said. "It also counteracts parasite infections in people."

Someone asked her if her hair would smell of garlic from her bonnet.

"You know what really smells in this?" she said. "The roses. Until you crush garlic, it has no smell at all. Incidentally, this ermine is very fake, and it's hot."

"Look, she's wearing a garlic crown!" a passerby exclaimed.

"Get that garlic," a woman said to her male companion.

"She has to throw it first," he said. "I can't go leaping around."

"She's getting violent," someone said. "Thelma just got hit."

"Long live the Queen!" someone else cried.

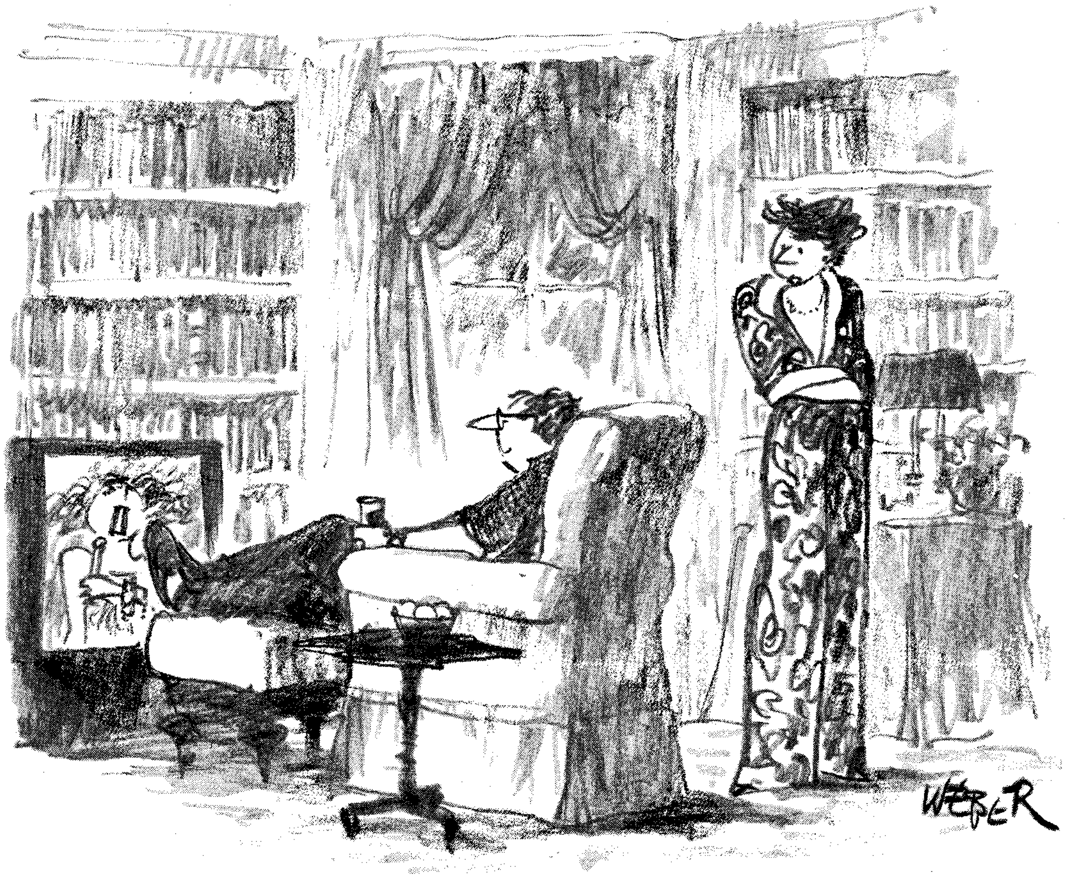
Raising a now empty hand, Ms. Brody waved.

Whirligig

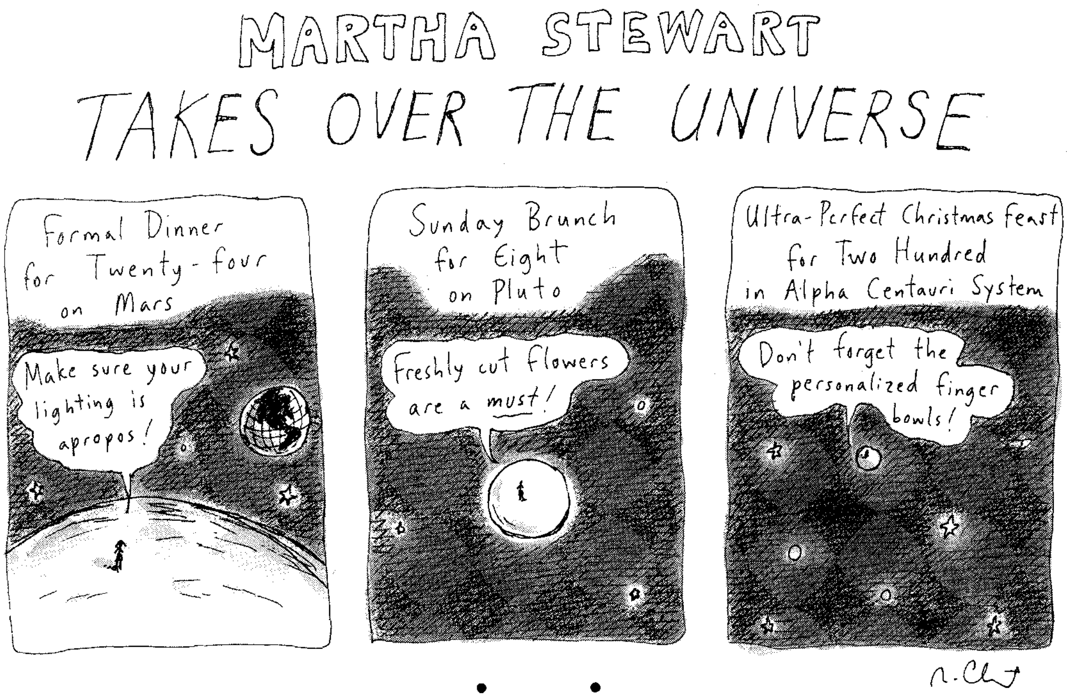
A GOOD way to know that summer has arrived is to find Morgan Rank back in his gallery in East Hampton. Every year, Mr. Rank spends the winter and spring travelling along back roads from Maine to California, looking for art objects in old barns. He doesn't look just for objects that happen not to be thought of as art by people who own barns on back roads; he looks for objects that are not yet thought of as art by anybody. After his months on the road, he returns to East Hampton and holds exhibitions of the things he has found, and then sells them. By the end of the summer, what Mr. Rank calls gravely "the finest example" of some newly invented genre—the finest flag with thirty-seven stars, or the most ornate tire-tread mold—is usually in a museum somewhere. He has an eye.

On a recent weekend, Mr. Rank finished hanging the first show of the new season. It was called "The Farmer's Cast-Iron Seat: 1850-1890." A farmer's seat is the thing you sat on while plowing if you happened to be a farmer in the nineteenth century and ordered a lot of stuff out of mail-order catalogues. "These are outstanding examples of the golden age of American cast iron," Mr. Rank told a visitor. "They are often called—wrongly—tractor seats. The fact is that tractors themselves appeared only after 1890. These pieces are seats for all-purpose farm machines—threshers, and whatever. They're some of the freest and most imaginative examples of pre-Civil War American cast iron that you can find."

If you hang a farmer's seat up, it looks like a heart. The seats are ornamented—with fans or stars, or just the name of the seat manufacturer, in bold letters with impressively heavy



"I used to think of you as one of the thousand points of light, but you've gone out."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serifs. "This is the first show of farmers' seats, and I expect it to do quite well, but the seats aren't my real discovery of the winter," Mr. Rank said. "My real discovery is more difficult, problematic. Do you know what a whirligig is? A whirligig is the kind of thing that you see in front of old farmhouses—one of those turning things like a weather vane, only not on top of a house. There's always a tail to catch the air, and usually a propeller in front. The art of the whirligig is to install some kind of figure up above the tail and propeller and then use the wind to animate the figure. Of course, it's best if it depicts something that has a constant motion back and forth. Convicts with sledgehammers—that sort of thing."

Mr. Rank settled in behind his desk and went on, "I was in my van this winter—the end of January, a bleak time—and I found myself in Tennessee. I was thinking farmers' seats when just outside"—he named a little town—"I came across a farm with the most beautiful whirligig I had ever seen. It was an airplane, perfectly articulated, with red-white-and-blue stars and stripes on the propeller, and the pilot and co-pilot appeared to be dropping watermelons. So I stopped the van and got out and went to the door. A woman answered my knock, and I told her that I would like to buy the whirligig out front. 'Well,' she said, 'you'd better talk to my husband.' I found the husband, and after a couple of minutes' conversation he agreed to sell me the whirligig. He was a Baptist preacher as well as a farmer, and this was his hobby—making whirligigs. I dismantled the airplane carefully and put it in the back of my van. And then I asked him if he had any other whirligigs. Just a couple of things like it, he said—smaller airplanes. I took a look at those, and I bought them, too. Then the three of us sat in the kitchen drinking sassafras tea and talking about this and that, and after a while he said, 'Well, I guess you wouldn't be interested in the whirligigs up on the mountain,' and I said, 'Why not?' He said, 'Well, they're kind of different.' I said that I'd like to see them, and so I followed him out behind the house, to a rocky hill back there. Even from a distance I could see that the hill was covered with whirligigs, all mounted on poles, a little orchard of propellers and sails and stiffly moving figures, and then I got closer and I realized that what this guy had been working on—it must have taken him years—was a kind of X-rated tableau of whirligigs. They were the most beautifully articulated whirligigs I had ever seen, and certainly the most erotic. He took me around and explained that these were all real people. He'd been keeping a kind of private, whirligig chronicle of the scandals of the town for the past twenty years—all the adulteries and the affairs and the one-night stands and the perversions, all whittled in wood and set on stakes in the ground and turning and turning in the wind up on this hill in Tennessee. He'd hear about something that his neighbors did, and he'd go make a whirligig to commemorate it. Some of the whirligigs were pretty libellous. There was even a sheriff there, naked but with his star on, and with a sheep."

Morgan Rank bought the entire collection, and for now he keeps the erotic whirligigs in storage. He showed us photographs of the collection. Each whirligig measures four or five feet across, and each has a stars-and-stripes propeller, and the figures are attached to the propeller and each other by a network of wire-hanger rods. The figures are gaunt, dignified, solemn, grave, unsalacious, and invested with an enormous, mysterious sense of purpose. Some solitary figures find company with watermelons, painted in bright reds and greens and spots of black. Others take their pleasure with fowl.

"What do I do?" Mr. Rank says. "If I put up a show of them, I'm definitely into Jesse Helms territory. I wish I could bring that preacher here, and sort of launch him as a kind of backwoods, whittlin' Henry Miller. But his wife made him promise to give them up. He's a preacher; he can't be associated with erotic whirligigs. I wish some museum would show them, but in the current climate . . ."

Thinking about that climate as we read the papers, we often think about the subtlest and most beautiful of all the erotic whirligigs. It consists of two figures separated by a large and poignant space. On the far right, a nude woman stands holding a banjo across her body, her whittled pink-and-white bosom just visible above. On the far left, Uncle Sam watches her. In his heavy stars-and-stripes suit, he looks uneasy at being near so beautiful and unashamed a nymph. When the wind blows, the red-white-and-blue propeller turns and both figures dance; the nymph's hands go up and down as she strums her banjo, and Uncle Sam slowly raises and lowers his hat, watching her, and thinking about what to do next.

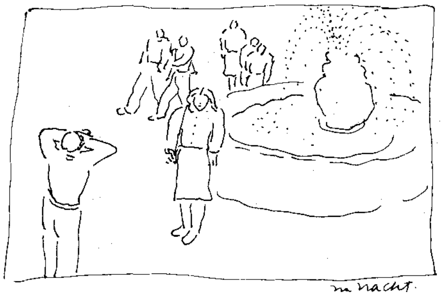
COLD HEART

ALL the windows in Lewis and Mariah's apartment had outside them iron bars twisted decoratively into curves and curls, so that if somehow the children should climb up on the windowsill and slip out, they would be unable to fall down from the tenth floor and land on the sidewalk. It was a reasonable thing to do, protect your children's lives, but all the same I was confounded: Couldn't human beings in their position—wealthy, comfortable, beautiful, with the best the world had to offer at their fingertips—be safe and secure and never suffer so much as the singeing of a hair on a child's head?

I was standing at one of those windows in the living room, looking down at the street. It was a cold day in October, and the wind was blowing small bits of rubbish about. As a child in school, I had learned how the earth tilts away from the sun and how that causes the different seasons; even though I was quite young when I learned about this, I had noticed that all the prosperous (and so, certainly, happy) people in the world inhabited the paths of the earth where the year, all three hundred and sixty-five days of it, was divided into four distinct seasons. I was born and grew up in a place that did not seem to be influenced by the tilt of the earth at all; it had only one season—sunny, drought-ridden. And what was the effect on me of growing up in such a place? I did not have a sunny disposition, and, as for happiness, I had been experiencing a long drought.

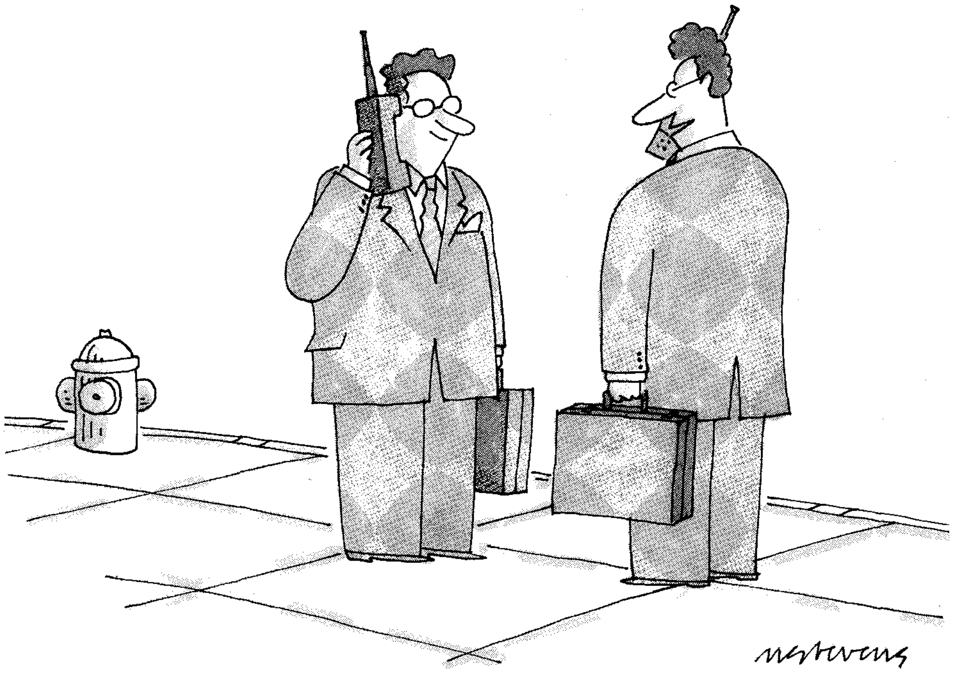
From where I stood at the window, I could see into the apartment across the way. A man and a woman and some children lived there. I had observed them before at various times. I had seen them in bathrobes, in evening clothes, and in ordinary, everyday wear. I had never seen these people do anything interesting—not exchange a kiss, not have what looked like a quarrel. They were always just passing through this room, as if it were a way station. Now it was empty of people. I could see a sofa, two chairs, and a wall of books. How luxurious, I thought, to have an empty room in your house, a room that nobody really needed. And isn't that what everyone in the world should have—more than you need, one more room than you really need in your house, in your life? Not a question I would put to Mariah, for she felt just the opposite. She had too much of everything, and so she longed to have less; less, she was sure, would bring her happiness. To me it was a laugh and a relief to observe the unhappiness that too much can bring; I had been so used to observing the results of too little. This reminded me that lately I had been having the same dream over and over: There was a present for me wrapped up in one of my mother's beautiful madras headkerchiefs. I did not know what the present itself was, but it was something that would make me exceedingly happy; the only trouble was that it lay at the bottom of a deep, murky pool, and no matter how much water I bailed out I always woke up before I got to the bottom.

It was a Sunday, and I was alone in the apartment. Mariah and Lewis had taken their children somewhere in the country to pick apples. The way they looked as they were leaving—if I had not known, I would have said, "What a happy family!" The children were well dressed, their stomachs filled with a delicious breakfast of muffins that Mariah had made from specially purchased ingredients, and bacon and eggs from what could only have been specially cared-for pigs and hens. As they waited for the elevator to come, they were laughing. Lewis was in the role of the amusing and adorable father today, and so he had put on a lion's mask and then said and done things not expected of a lion. The children, in response, shrieked and laughed and fell down on top of each other with pleasure. When the elevator came, it was hard for them to just calmly go into it, and Mariah gathered up their coats and gloves and hats and "shoo-shooed" them, mocking the gesture of a farm wife to a brood of chicks. All of them, mother and father and four children, looked healthy, robust—everything about them solid, authentic; but I was looking at ruins, and I knew it right then. The actual fall of this edifice I hoped not to be around to see, but just in case I could not make my own exit I made plans to avert my eyes.



I was waiting for a call from my friend Peggy. Since it was a Sunday, she had gone to church with her mother and then to visit an old relative who insisted on living alone. Peggy was going to call to let me know what time we should meet in the park. It was our custom on Sunday afternoons to go for a walk in the park and look around, then pick out the men we imagined we would like to sleep with. We would pay careful attention to their bottoms, their legs, their shoulders, and their faces, especially their mouths. If all passed muster, though, Peggy would put a stop to our making an approach. She would look closely at their hands and say that though everything else seemed acceptable, their hands were too small. She had said to me—with such sincerity I almost thought it something taught to her in class—that if a man had small hands, it meant he had a small penis to match. When she first said this to me, it came as a complete surprise: I had never dreamed that such a thing as a penis did not come in a uniform size. When I then asked her what could a small penis mean to me, she raised her eyebrows and said only, "Disappointment." It soon became clear that I was a failure at judging the size of a man's hand, and so it was left up to Peggy. Always when we went to the park we came home alone, just the two of us.

I did not like Sundays, and this one was not an exception. I could not believe this feeling about Sundays had followed me halfway across the world. I could not explain it, this feeling. What exactly was Sunday meant to be? Always on that day I felt such despair I would have been happy to turn into something as useful as a dishrag. When I was at home, in my parents' house, I used to make a list of all the things that I was quite sure would not follow me if only I could cross the vast ocean that lay before me; I used to think that just a change in venue would banish forever from my life the things I most despised. But that was not to be so. As each day unfolded before me, I could see the sameness in everything; I could see the present take a shape—the shape of my past.



"Nice talking to you, Al!"

My past was my mother; always I could hear her voice, and she spoke to me not in English or the French patois that she sometimes spoke, or in any language that needed help from the tongue; she spoke to me in language anyone female could understand. And I was undeniably that—female. Oh, it was a laugh, for I had spent so much time saying I did not want to be like my mother that I missed the whole story: I was not like my mother—I was my mother. And I could see now why, to the few feeble attempts I made to draw a line between us, her reply always was "You can run away, but you cannot escape the fact that I am your mother, my blood runs in you, I carried you for nine months inside me." How else was I to take such a statement but as a sentence for life in a prison whose bars were stronger than any iron imaginable? I had, at that very moment, a collection of letters from her in my room, nineteen in all, one for every year of my life, unopened. I thought of opening the letters, not to read them but to burn them at the four corners and send them back to her unread. It was an act, I had heard somewhere, of one lover rejecting another, but I could not trust myself to go too near them. I knew that if I read only one, I would die from longing for her.

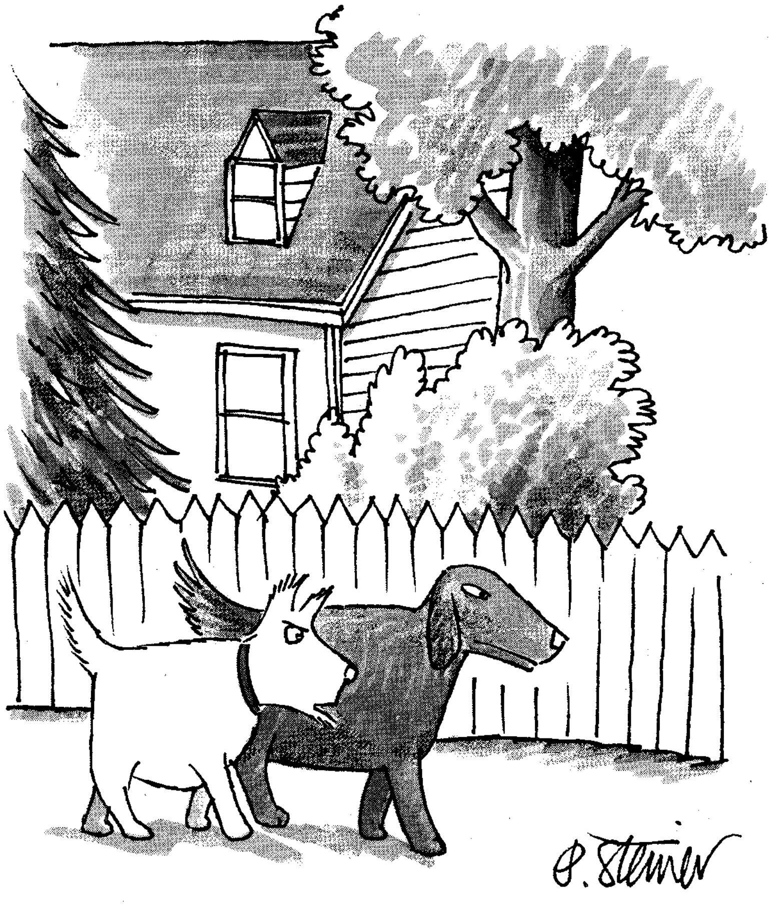
Peggy did not call me from a telephone; she came to the apartment directly. She couldn't wait to get away from her family, she said; they were a bunch of absolutely nothing. How I envied the contempt in her voice, for I could see that her family held no magic over her. We went to the park. No men with large hands could be found. We went our separate ways, but made plans to speak to each other on the telephone the next day. I went home to my room in Lewis and Mariah's apartment and sat on my bed. I thought of the summer I had just spent. I had come to see the sameness in things that were different. I had experienced moments of great happiness and a desire to imagine my own future, and at the same time I had had a great disillusionment. But was this not what life should be—some ups and downs instead of a constant dangerous undertow, capable of pulling you under for good?

Right after we had returned from the summer at the lake, I decided I would not attend school at night anymore or study to become a nurse. Whatever my future held, a nurse would not be a part of it. I had to wonder what made anyone think a nurse could be made of me. I was not good at taking orders from anyone, not good at waiting on other people. Why did someone not think that I would make a good doctor or a good magistrate or a good someone who runs things? As a child, I had always been told what a good mind I had, and though I never believed it myself, it allowed me to cut quite a figure of authority among my peers. A nurse, as far as I could see, was a badly paid person, a person who was forced to be in awe of someone above her (a doctor), a person with cold and rough hands, a person who lived alone and ate badly boiled food because she could not afford a cook, a person who, in the process of easing suffering, caused more suffering (the badly administered injection). I knew such a person. She was a friend of my mother's and had delivered me when I was born. She was a woman my mother respected to her face but had many bad things to say about behind her back. They were: she would never find a man; no man would have her; she carried herself like a strongbox, and from the look on her face a man couldn't find a reason to break in; she had lived alone for so long it was too late to start with a man now. But among the last things my mother had said to me, just before I left, was "Oh, I can just see you in your nurse's uniform. I shall be very proud of you." And I could only guess which nurse's uniform she meant—the uniform made of cloth or the one made of circumstances.

As I sat on that bed, the despair of a Sunday in full bloom, I thought: I am alone in the world, and I shall always be this way—all alone in the world, nineteen years of age and all alone in the world.

I had begun to suffer from violent headaches, exactly like the ones that used to afflict my mother. They would come on suddenly, as if I had been struck by a bolt of lightning, last for a while, and then disappear. They frightened me because I did not know when one would come on, and they frightened me because they reminded me of my mother. One day, in the midst of an argument I was having with her in which I was trying to assert my will and meeting defeat again, I had turned to her and said, "I wish you were dead." I said it with such force that had I said it to anyone else but her, I am sure my wish would have come true. But of course I would not have said such a thing to anyone else, for no one else meant so much to me. Her desire not to please me was greater than my desire to erase her, but it so took her by surprise—my wish for such a thing—that she got a headache, a bad one, and it caused her to take to her bed. This lasted for days, and at night I would hear sounds in our house that made me sure my mother had died and the undertaker had come to take her body away. Each morning when I saw her face again, I trembled inside with joy. And so now when I suffered from these same headaches that no medicine would send away, I would see her face before me, a face that was godlike, for it seemed to know its own origins, to know all the things of which it was made.

MY friendship with Peggy was reaching a predictable stalemate; the small differences between us were beginning to loom, sometimes becoming the only thing that mattered—a grain of sand in the eye. She did not like to read books of any kind. She did not like to go to the museum. Going to the museum had become a passion with me. I did not grow up in a place where there was such a thing, but as soon as I discovered it, that was the only place I liked going out to visit. It was Mariah who had taken me there; she had wanted me to see some paintings by a man, a Frenchman, who had gone halfway across the world to live and had painted pictures of the people he found living there. He had been a banker living a comfortable life with his wife and children, but that did not make him happy; eventually he left them and went to the opposite part of the world, where he was happier. I don't know if Mariah meant me to, but immediately I identified with the yearnings of this man; I understood finding the place you are born in an unbearable prison and wanting something completely unlike what you are familiar with, knowing it represents a haven. I wondered about the details of his despair, for I felt it would comfort me to know. Of course his life could be found in the pages of a book; I had just begun to notice that the lives of men always are. He was shown to be a man rebelling against an established order he had found corrupt; and even though he was doomed to defeat—he died an early death—he had the perfume of the hero about him. I was not a man; I was a young woman from the fringes of the world, and when I left my home I had wrapped around my shoulders the mantle of a servant.

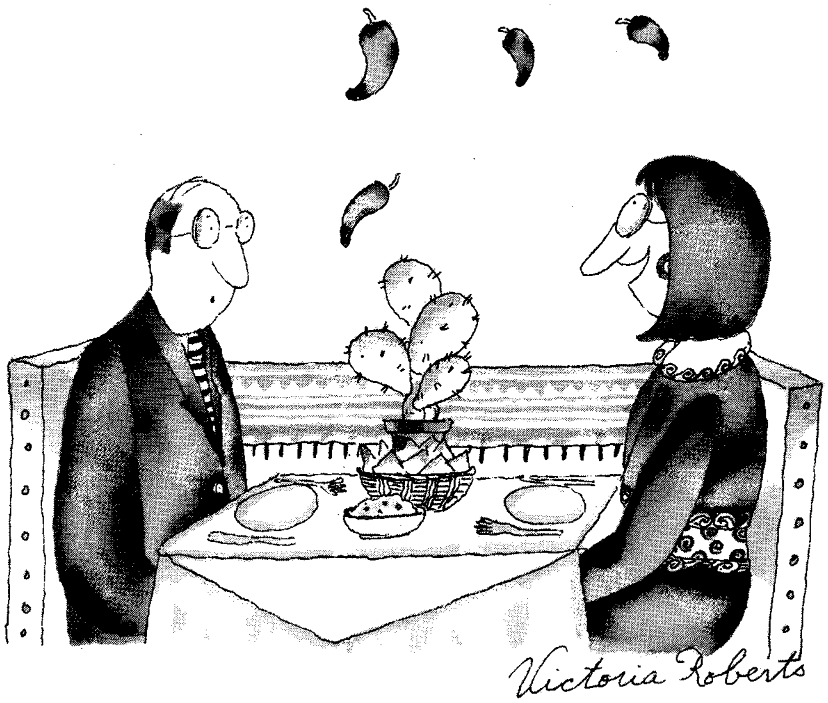


"It's always 'Sit,' 'Stay,' 'Heel'—never 'Think,' 'Innovate,' 'Be yourself.'"

I was having a thought not unlike this when, unexpectedly, Mariah came up to me. The look on my face must have shocked her, for she said, "You are a very angry person, aren't you?" and her voice was filled with alarm and pity. Perhaps I should have said something reassuring; perhaps I should have denied it. But I did not. I said, "Of course. What do you expect?"

PEGGY took me to a party in a neighborhood I had never visited before. There were fewer street lights there, the buildings were uncared for, there was rubbish all about, and there were almost no people walking around. None of this frightened me; on the contrary, I found it quite thrilling. We went into a building and climbed up some cement stairs, and then we were in a large, nice room lighted with candles and filled with plants that I knew grew in a rain forest, for I had seen them growing there. The room smelled of myrrh and marijuana. It was a party given by someone she knew from her office, a man from whom she often got the marijuana we smoked. Whatever he did in her office was not what he planned to do for his whole life. He was a painter, and some of his paintings were hanging on the walls. They were paintings of people, some of them women without their clothes on, some of them just faces. None of the paintings were straightforward; instead, the people all looked like their reflections in a pool whose surface had just been disturbed. The colors were strange—not the colors any real person would be, but as if all the deep shades from a paintbox had been carefully mixed together in a way that still left them distinct. Peggy had told me about him. She had told me that he was a pervert. I did not know exactly what she meant by that, and she never told me what he had said or done to make her think so. He might have tried to kiss her; she hated men to kiss her unless their mouths tasted of cigarettes. When we were introduced, he took my hand and kissed me on the cheek. It was the way he greeted women.

His name was Paul. I said, "How are you?" in a small, proper voice, the voice of the girl my mother had hoped I would be: clean, virginal, beyond reproach. But I felt the opposite of that, for when he held my hand and kissed me on the cheek, I felt instantly



"Did you order the flying jalapeños?"

deliciously strange; I wanted to be naked in a bed with him. And I wanted to see what he really looked like, not his reflection in a pool whose surface had just been disturbed.

It was a party of ten people, including Peggy and myself. Peggy knew the others in one way or another. I had never met any of them before. This was a part of her life I did not know, and I could see why. They were very chatty people, chatty in a way she did not like: they were talking about the world, they were talking about themselves, and everything they said seemed to take for granted that it mattered. They were artists. I had heard of people in this position. I had never seen an example in the place where I came from. I noticed that mostly they were men. It seemed to be a position that allowed for irresponsibility, so perhaps it was much better suited to men—like the man whose paintings hung in the museum that I liked to visit. Yes, I had heard of these people: they died insane, they died paupers, no one much liked them except other people like themselves. And I thought of all the people in the world I had known who went insane and died, and who drank too much rum and died, and who were paupers and died, and I wondered if there were any artists among them. Who would have known? And I thought, I am *not* an artist, but I shall always like to be with the people who stand apart. I had just begun to notice that people who knew the correct way to do things such as hold a teacup, put food on a fork and bring it to their mouth without making a mess on the front of their dress—they were the people responsible for the most misery, the people least likely to end up insane or paupers.

I had smoked quite a bit of marijuana and was feeling quite happy and otherworldly. I was staring at some plants that were growing in pots on a windowsill, plants I knew by the names of cassy and dagger. The cassy I used to eat with fungy and salt fish; it was said to be a vegetable good for cleaning out a person's insides. The dagger we used to pound with a stone until it became stringlike and then plait so that it resembled a long braid of hair; at Christmastime it became part of a clown's costume and would be lashed in the air to make a sound frightening to children. These two plants grew so plentifully where I came from that sometimes they were regarded as a nuisance, weeds, and were dug up and thrown in the rubbish. And now here they were, treasured, sitting in a prominent place in a beautiful room, a special blue light trained on them. And here I was also, a sort of weed in a way, and across the room Paul's eyes, a sparkling blue light, were trained on me; his eyes reminded me of a marble I used to have, my lucky marble, the one that, when I played a game with it, always won.

This is usually the moment when people say they fall in love, but I did not fall in love. Being in such a state was not something I longed for. It was true that I had seen so little of the world that I hardly knew what I really thought of anything. In any case, as I looked back at this man whose eyes reminded me of my winning marble, the question of being in love was not one I wanted to settle then; what I wanted was to be alone in a room with him and naked. He came over and sat next to me; he asked me where I was from; he touched my hair, and I could tell that the texture of it was new to him. I laughed a laugh that I could not believe came out of me; it was a gurgly laugh, a laugh shot full of pleasure and insincerity; it was the laugh of a woman on whom not long ago I would have heaped scorn. It was understood that when everyone left, I would not leave with them.

At that moment I looked up and saw Peggy staring at me with her own blue eyes; they were sparkling also, but with anger. She gestured to me to follow her into the bathroom, and when we got there she said to me, "I told you he's a creep, I told you he's a pervert." When I said, "But I like him," an enormous silence fell between us, the kind of silence that is dangerous between friends, for in it they weigh their past together, and they try to see a future together; they hate their present. It is never happy. Peggy lit a cigarette. Some of her hair had fallen forward into her face; she pushed it back, but it fell forward again. She placed her teeth together and sent a mouthful of smoke toward me. This had never happened before. We had never quarrelled. I had never chosen the company of a man over hers. I had never chosen anyone over her. She said, "Can't you see from his hands he's bound to have a small prick?" Something to say to her quickly came to mind, but I could not give voice to it; it was too cruel. I immediately imagined our separately going over the life of our friendship, and all the affection and all the wonderful moments in it coming to a sharp end.

We came out of the bathroom feeling, I suppose, relief that we had avoided a permanent collapse between us, but also knowing that sometime, sooner or later, we would only exist for each other with a faint "Oh, yes . . ." The room was full of laughter; all attention was directed at Paul, whose hands were plunged into a fish tank in an effort to retrieve an earring of rhinestones in the shape of a starfish. It looked strangely at home there, for all the things in the tank—the coral, the vegetation, the sand, even the fish—had looked unreal in the first place. Paul's hands, as they moved about the tank, looked strange also; the flesh looked like bone, and as if it had been placed in a solution that had leached all the life away.

PENTIMENTO

In the window of the door a ghost hand is waving
as my mother would wave at every exit;
with her melancholy, hangdog expression,
the smile of a woman condemned to die, she'd call
to my father, "Be careful! Both my eggs
are in one basket!"

Now my two-year-old son is yelling
from inside the car "What's wrong, Ma?
What's the matter?" and I'm screaming
"Nothing—have a nice day!" like some insane salesperson,
when I catch sight of that pale flag waving,
poor bird, poor body, one wing stretched forward
to catch its own falling.

—Liz Rosenberg

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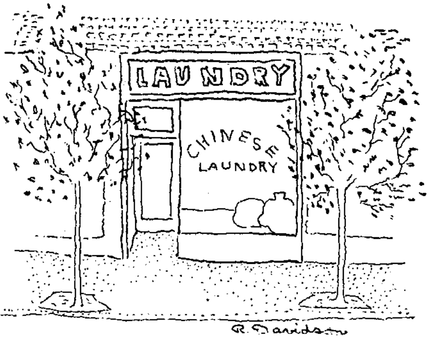
I USED to know a girl named Myrna, whose mother was so cruel that it was as if she were not a mother at all but a wicked stepmother. Perhaps in response to this situation, everything about Myrna refused to attain a normal size: her body, her eyes, her nose, her mouth—even her hair would grow no longer than the length of a fingernail, and she was often described as "that picky-haired girl." Though she lived in the house across from me, we were not friends, but our families shared the same fishermen, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Mathew, and she and I would often stand together under a tree, shading ourselves from the hot sun, waiting for them to return from sea with that day's catch. One day, Mr. Mathew came back in their boat alone; there was no Mr. Thomas, and there were no fish. A squall had sprung up out at sea, and in the midst of it Mr. Thomas had been swept overboard as he was trying to retrieve some fish pots. As Mr. Mathew told the story, he seemed unable to believe what he was saying himself, as if he expected someone to tell him that it had all been a mistake, he had imagined the whole thing. He was so pitiful my heart broke just looking at him. He had been orphaned as a child; his mother and father had died when they were trapped in a sugarcane field that was on fire, and now he was orphaned again, for he and Mr. Thomas had been like parents to each other, as would be expected of two people who depended on each other as much as they did. He then started to cry, and it was such a sorrowful sound I did not know a man could sound like that. I wanted to say something to him, something that would be comforting and at the same time take his mind away from his sorrow, if only for a moment, but all I could say was "Poor Mr. Thomas, poor Mr. Thomas, and, you know, he would have enjoyed growing old with you so much—just the two of you sitting here mending your nets." As I was saying this, I knew it would have the opposite effect of what I wanted it to have, but I couldn't help myself. I turned away, taking Myrna's arm, and we started to walk home.

We walked along for a while, and then I realized that she was crying quite hard, and that made me feel how wrong I always am about my judgments of other people, because if I had been asked I would have said that Myrna was not capable of feeling great sorrow about Mr. Thomas's death or about too much else, for that matter. And so I put my arm around her shoulders and gave her a squeeze, at the same time saying a lot of nonsense I didn't believe, nonsense about Mr. Thomas's going to a better place, nonsense about there being a great and wise purpose behind such a thing as Mr. Thomas's being swept overboard. Her response to this was to push me away with a great big shove, her eyes boiling with anger and contempt. And she told me some things. She told me that she had not been crying for Mr. Thomas at all—she had been crying for herself. She said that she used to meet Thomas (she did not call him "Mr." now) under a breadfruit tree that was near her latrine and near the entrance to the alley that was at the back of her house, and she would stand in the dark, fully clothed but without her panties, and he would put his middle finger up inside her. It never lasted very long, for her mother would become suspicious if she was missing from her house for too long a time. She and Mr. Thomas never spoke about it; often she would go to this place and he would not show up; he never explained. After he had removed his finger from inside her, he would give to her sometimes a shilling, sometimes just sixpence; he never told her why it was sometimes more, sometimes less. She kept the money in an old Ovaltine tin, hidden under the stones in the middle of her mother's stone heap. She said that she had not decided exactly what she was going to do with the money yet, but whatever it would be she did not yet have enough. She said it was for this she cried: whatever she would eventually do with the money, she did not have enough of it yet.

I, of course, had many feelings about this amazing story—all the predictable ones—but then one feeling came to dominate the others: I was almost overcome with jealousy. Why had such an

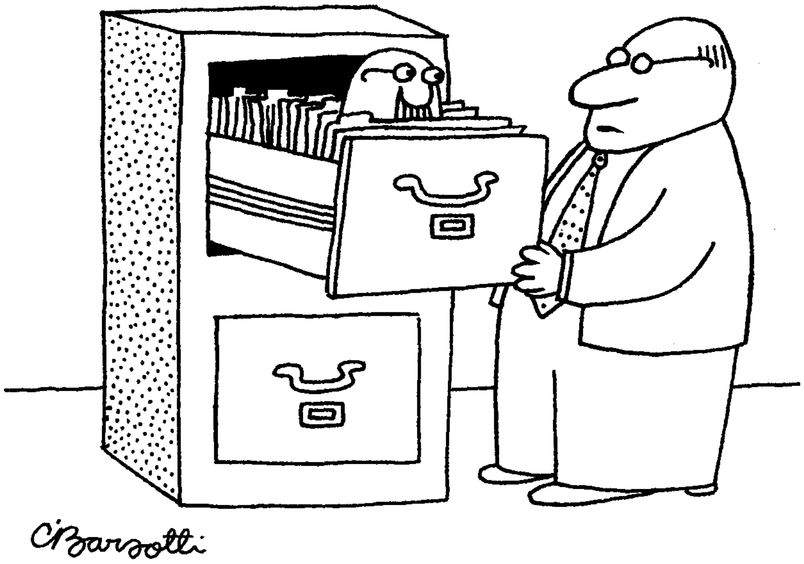


extraordinary thing happened to her and not to me? Why had Mr. Thomas chosen Myrna as the girl he would meet in secret and place his middle finger up inside, not me? Myrna spoke of this in a flat, uninterested way, as if all they had done was share a cup of fresh rainwater together. This would have become the experience of my life, the one all others would have to live up to. What a waste! It meant nothing to Myrna; she only spoke of the money, and even so she did not have a plan for what she would do with that. For me, the money would have been beside the point. I am sure I would have given it away; I am sure, in fact, that I would have found a way to steal a shilling or two and give it to Mr. Thomas to have been in Myrna's shoes. Oh, the injustice of everything. What words did Mr. Thomas use to make this arrangement with her, and why, again, had I not been worthy of hearing them?

I remembered that he had a wide mouth, large lips, and a big wide pink tongue, which could be seen clearly when he laughed—a loud laugh. He had the sort of bloodshot eyes that betray a lot of rum-drinking. He smoked so many cigarettes that sometimes when he came to deliver the fish to us, he smelled more of tobacco than he did of the sea. He called me Little Miss. Once, my mother had sent me to his house—the house he and Mr. Mathew shared—with the payment for a week's worth of fish, and when he came to the door and saw that it was me he said, "Oh, my!" and he went back inside, because he wasn't wearing a shirt, just his underpants, which were oversized and made of the same blue chambray as my father's. When he came back, he was wearing an old madras shirt, patched here and there, and he held the cigarette he was smoking behind his back, because since he wasn't my father or a close relative, smoking a cigarette in front of me would show disrespect. He thanked me for the payment, and as I was turning to leave he said, "And how is life treating you, Little Miss? How is school?" And I had replied, "As well as can be expected, sir, as well as can be expected." With that answer, I knew I was being a direct imitation of my mother, and he knew it, too, for he just burst out laughing, and I got a good look at his big tongue and gums and teeth. I felt so embarrassed that I had caused him to laugh so heartily and with such abandon when we were alone that I stumbled away without saying goodbye, and he called after me, "God bless you, Little Miss." It was a way of letting me know that no offense had occurred on either side. That was the Mr. Thomas I knew, a nice man who went to sea and always brought me back the fish I liked, which my mother would then cook in a sauce of lime juice, butter, onions, and green pepper. And, in turn, I suppose he would have said, if he could, that the Little Miss he knew was a teen-age girl so beyond reproach in every way that if you asked her a question she would reply in her mother's forty-year-old voice—hardly a prospect for a secret rendezvous.

After Myrna had finished telling me her story, we walked home in silence. There were so many things to say, so many questions to ask, but I didn't know where to start. I was afraid that if I asked one thing I would reveal my feelings and show how familiar I was with what she had just described. I could not ask, for instance, "Did it feel great?," which was really one of the things I most wanted to know. I might betray that right then I was screaming inside, "*This should have happened to me! This should have been me!*" I could have retreated into falseness and said all the appropriate disapproving things, but I saw she was beyond this. Our houses were soon in view, and so I said, mock sympathy on my face and in my voice, "Did it hurt?" The look she gave—I was the one who felt like dirt.

That night, as I lay on my bed, of course unable to sleep, I thought of the events of the day, dwelling not so much on Mr. Thomas's falling overboard as on Myrna and Mr. Thomas's meeting in the alley near the latrine, under the shade of the breadfruit tree. I imagined her at the end of a long day, after cooking her family's food, washing their clothes, getting water from the pipes that were far away from her house, and in other ways waiting on them hand and foot, and then finally, after eating her supper, perhaps pretending to make a visit to the latrine, waiting in the dark for Mr. Thomas. She had made mention of no kiss on the hair, no fierce tongue in her ear or mouth, no kisses on the neck, no hands caressing breasts. Just his hands between her legs, with one finger going up inside her. And there I had to stop. What did Mr. Thomas's hands look like? I did not know. At the time, I thought it would haunt me until the day I died. I had never noticed his hands. I remembered many things about him: his mouth, his teeth, his gums, even his feet. His feet were big and broad, with cracks around the heels. I had never seen a pair of shoes



"Sorry, Elliott, but everything in this file is to be put on microfilm."

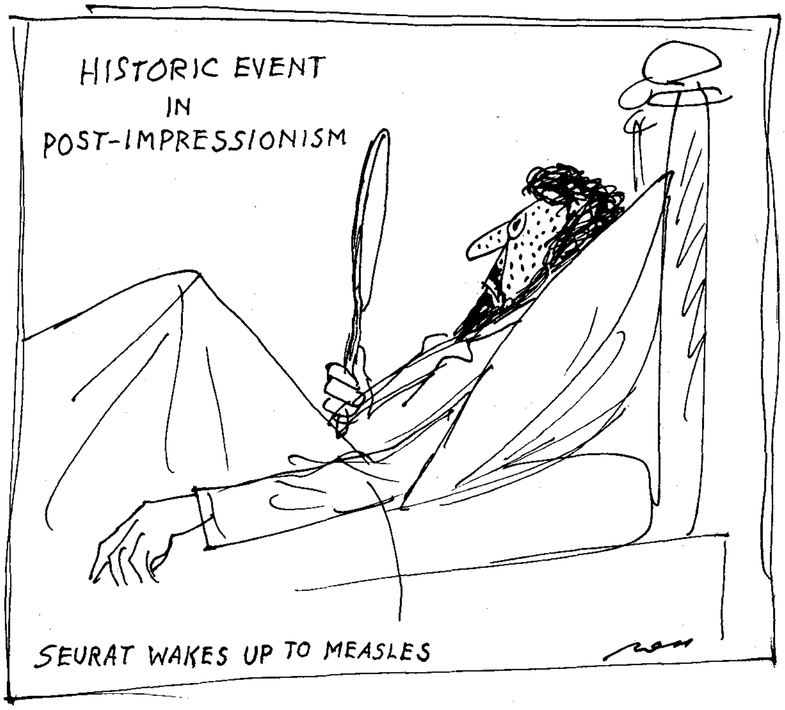
on them. I had once seen him walking in mud. The mud was soft, and it came through his toes, four little pats decorating the ground. But his hands—what did they look like? I did not know, and I never would know. And so it was that hands I would come to know very well—Paul's hands, moving about in the fish tank—reminded me of some other hands lost forever in a warm sea.

BECAUSE Peggy and I were now not getting along, we naturally started to talk about finding an apartment in which we would live together. It was an old story: two people are in love, and then just at the moment they fall out of love they decide to marry. Our thoughts went this way: would it not be nice if Peggy no longer had to take a train each day back to the house in which she lived with her parents, two people whose views about everything she found abominable; would it not be nice if I no longer had to live in Mariah and Lewis's apartment and take care of their children, if I could have a life of my own and come and go at my own convenience and when it pleased me? There was nothing wrong with my life as I lived it with Mariah and Lewis, but I could hardly imagine spending the rest of it overseeing their children in one situation or another. And the children would not remain children forever. I began to feel like a dog on a leash, a long leash but a leash all the same. Mariah was like a mother to me, a good mother. If she went to a store to buy herself new things, she thought of me and would bring me something also. Sometimes she paid me more money than it had been agreed I would earn. When I told her how much I enjoyed going to the museum, she gave me my own card of membership. Always she expressed concern for my well-being. I realized again and again how lucky I was to have met her and to work for her and not, for instance, some of her friends. But there was no use pretending. I was not the sort of person who counted blessings; I was the sort of person for whom there could never be enough blessings. Besides, there was something else.

When I was around thirteen or so, my mother had pointed out to me a girl—her goddaughter, in fact—who had just turned nineteen years of age; my mother had said what a wonderful person this girl was, how she had given her parents such cause to be proud of her, and how, generally speaking, she was a good example to all girls who came after her. I had known this girl close up, and I had come to a different conclusion about her. For my mother used to place me in her care from time to time, hoping, I suppose, that some of her good example would rub off on me. If I did anything she considered bad, she would threaten to give me senna tea, a purgative that caused bad stomach gripes; or she would threaten to put me in a barrel and shut the lid tight and forget about me. When I did things that pleased her, she would bathe me and comb my hair and dress me up in her old clothes, and then she would insist that I go to sleep in a clothes basket lined with clean rags. I was much too big for the basket, but she would force me to lie in it all cramped up until she thought an appropriate time had passed. It was hard to see the difference between the punishments for one set of things and the rewards for others. This girl's name was Maude, Maude Quick, and her father was the head of jails—Her Majesty's Prisons—and I used to think of her as my own personal jailer. I had long ago grown to despise her, and so as soon as my mother finished singing this long Psalm of Maude, I burst out, "When I turn nineteen I will be living at home only if I drop dead." This made my mother fall into a silence—a sadness, really—for she didn't know what to do. It was the beginning of my expressing hatred, hostility, anger toward my parents, sometimes with words, sometimes with deeds. And now it was true, but not true enough to suit me: I was nineteen, I was not dead, I was not living in the home I grew up in. I was living in a home, though, and it was not my own.

A STRANGE calm had come over Mariah and Lewis's apartment now. They quarrelled constantly but never in my presence. I would return to the apartment after running an errand with the children in tow, and I could smell the disagreement in the air. Something serious had been said. Perhaps it was "I no longer love you." Lewis would have said that, and it was true; he no longer loved Mariah. He would have said it in a kind way, because it is so easy to be kind when you are in his position, the winning-hand position. Always when I came in, Mariah's eyes were in one of the various stages of a cry. Mariah was, after all, not my mother, for anyone who made my mother cry so much—she would have seen to that person's demise immediately.

One day Mariah and I were in the kitchen, seated at the table. This is where we always found ourselves if we had to talk about anything at all. She had made me a cup of coffee, strong, with lots of hot, steaming milk, and she had served it to me in a large cup, the size of a small bowl. She had learned to make it that way in France, where she had lived when she was about my age. I began to tell her about my life with Paul,



SEURAT WAKES UP TO MEASLES

which was spent almost entirely in his bed. I told her everything that we did, all the small details that to someone with more experience of the world would have gone unnoticed. There was much to take note of; except for eating, all the time we spent together was devoted to sex. I told her what everything felt like, how surprised I was to be thrilled by the violence of it (for sometimes it was that, violent), what an adventure this part of my life had become, and how much I looked forward to it, because I had not known that such pleasure could exist and, what was more, be available to me.

I had been speaking in this way for a while when Mariah interrupted and said, "We have such bad sex." Those words came as a shock to me, for I had never thought of that. Bad sex. I wondered what exactly did she mean. From my mother I had gathered that the experience would leave you feeling indifferent, that during it you might make out the grocery list, pick out a style of curtains, memorize a subtle but choice insult for people who imagined themselves above you. But I had never imagined the word "bad" could be applied to it, and as soon as she said it I knew what she meant: it was like wanting a sugar apple and getting a spoiled one; and while you're eating the spoiled one, the memory of a good-tasting one will not go away. Mariah then told me of how, during the time she was my age and living in France, she had stayed with a family, friends of her parents, and begun an affair with the husband. It was a disaster. She said, "His erection would grow limp whenever he tried to enter me." She had blamed herself, as only Mariah would; she had thought there was something wrong with her or that she was doing something wrong altogether. She later came to understand that he was an old, impotent man and that he found it easier to blame a young girl for his condition than to face the possibility that in this area he was all washed up. The incident had left a mark, and it always took her a while with a new lover to forget herself completely. I didn't say it, but I thought, Of course what you need right now is to forget yourself completely.

BREAKFAST OF THE GREETING-CARD POETS
GOOD MORNING, DEAR, AND HOW ARE YOU? I WISH YOU CHEER AND JOY, TOO.
THANK YOU, LOVE, HOW SWEET TO HEAR YOUR MESSAGE BRIGHT WITH WORDS OF CHEER.

ONE day a letter arrived for me, and written all over the envelope in my mother's beautiful handwriting was the word "URGENT." To me the letter might as well have had written all over it the words "Do not open until doomsday," because I added it to all the unopened letters I had received from home. That day I decided to go and buy a camera. Mariah had given me a book of photographs, because in the museum were some photographs that I particularly liked. They were photographs of ordinary people in a countryside doing ordinary things, but for a reason that was not at all clear to me the people and the things they were doing looked extraordinary—as if these people and these things had not existed before. When I said to her how much it pleased me to go and look at these pictures, she went out and bought me a book that contained all of them. Whenever I had a free moment, I would sit in my room and pore over this book. The people in the photographs reminded me of people I had known—a photograph of one boy, in particular. He was wearing short pants, walking along in a jaunty way, and he carried in his arms two large bottles. He reminded me of a boy I used to know, a boy named Cuthbert. He was a distant cousin of mine who lived on another island, and so I never saw him enough to get tired of him. His breath always smelled as if it were morning and he had just got out of bed—stale and moldy. I liked that smell so much that whenever I had to talk to him I used to position myself so that the smell of his breath would come my way. From looking at this book of photographs, I decided to buy myself a camera.

And then something happened that I had not counted on at all. At the store where I bought the camera, the man who sold it to me—he and I went off and spent the rest of the day and half of that night in his bed. The moment we knew it would end up that way was when, as he was handing to me a camera that folded up like a jack-in-the-box, I looked across at his face and said, "You remind me of my father," and he said, "In that case you should kiss me." His reply was a joke, but it confirmed my observation. I waited two hours outside the store for him to finish

FIRST ASTHMA

I must have been no more than six
or seven that autumn afternoon

because we left that town
by the time I was eight.

Two taxidermists. Twins.
The house was cut back from the road.

The forking dirt paths strewn
with bits of straw and wire led to the sheds

where the taxidermists divvied up their spoils—
a refrigerator shed and a shed

where the wooden bolt was not locked.
The padlock on the one shed door

I came back to and back to
hung like an anchor on a chain.

Not a blade of grass on their land.
The walls of the sunken living room crawled

with the black sad beaks of the ducks
craning their necks on twining hooks and platforms,

the indelible black-green of their feathers,
the same black-green as the dull flannel

shirts the taxidermists wore tromping through the maze
of their grounds, never crossing paths.

They moved with the heaviness of figures in a dream.
I couldn't imagine them taking off their clothes,

or without the dust caked on their skin.
The smell comes back. No name for it.

We had gone to see the taxidermists' father.
His name was Happy.

His right hand fidgeted with his hearing aid—
as if dredging up signals from the underworld.

As everyone yelled into his ears Hap looked baffled,
but "happy," like a dog or a child.

The taxidermists' weimaraners herded us in, circling.
They rubbed against me without affection.

Hap's grandson exploded onto the scene in a dust cloud,
wet black hair combed down over his broad forehead.

He swallowed ice like water.
He drank his afternoon's ration of M&M's in one gulp.

I held on to mine, sucking one at a time.
He picked an unharvested ear of corn and gnawed the cob.

He ignored the splinters we picked up hauling planks.
I hesitated. He acted. I wanted to like him.

I'd overheard that his mother had just remarried
out of her faith, and that as soon as his chores were over

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his work, and then we went to his apartment. On the way, we exchanged the usual information: our names, where we were from, things we liked, things we did not like. His name was Roland; he was born in Panama but his parents were from Martinique; he liked the sound of rain falling on tree leaves, it made him feel soothed; he did not like snow. It was information to pass the time, information to avoid awkwardness, information of no real importance, and we knew that. We did not exchange telephone numbers.

I left Roland's bed only because I had told Paul that I would see him later that night. Paul was used to this. Peggy could not stand to be with the two of us, and so I would spend the first part of the evening with her and then go to spend the rest of the night with Paul. Always Peggy and I quarrelled before we parted, but we knew we would speak to or see each other the next day. The night was cold; there was a wind. Roland lived on the opposite side of town from Paul, so I took a taxi; it was a half hour's ride away, enough time to bury a secret. At the door I planted a kiss on Paul's mouth with an uncontrollable ardor that I actually did feel—a kiss of treachery, for I could still taste the other man in my mouth. The cold wind had left my lips the texture of stale toast, but he ate me up as if I were a freshly baked cake. He was glad to see me and said, "I love you," and I thought, So that's what that sounds like when someone really means it. I kissed him doubly hard, and instantly I knew it was a mistake, for he mistook my enthusiasm for his love returned. In the morning, he said that Peggy had called me in the early part of the evening, wanting to know if I was with him. His voice was without suspicion. I said, "She's such a nuisance," and flew into an attack on her character, as if that were the point. He did not know that what he wanted was an answer to the question, Where had I been if I had not been with Peggy or at home?

THE children and I had gone for a walk in the park, and we returned to the apartment with the usual sounds of torment and pleasure. Lewis and Mariah were sitting in their living room, and the children ran in to greet them. I followed, carrying my camera, which I now took with me everywhere, and when I saw them, apart yet close together, Mariah's eyes red from tears, a crooked smile on her face as if she were a child trying to put up a brave front, I knew that the end was here, the ruin was in front of me. For a reason that will never be known to me, I said, "Say 'cheese,' " and took a

he'd return to her. As we replaced the scarecrow's vest
he spoke for the first time: "I'm not a Jew anymore.

I'm a Lutheran now. It's settled."
Was this the unseen source of his liberation?

When I looked back at the porch Hap was scowling.
His rage silenced the fields and plains,

the clouds stopped in the thick blue air,
the sun went out.

I zipped my jacket against the chill
but that only made it colder.

The moon's lip stuck at the horizon,
but there was no horizon.

Fields dipped and rolled,
studded with dry mounds like camels' humps.

I was other, and alone—
desperate for the fields to stop going on

with no purpose.
I remember running toward some mounds

like sand hills, hard-caked dirt
that wouldn't slosh down after rain—

it would take a flood.
I crouched to watch the goings on—

the songless indifferent hum of the landscape,
the ferocious dry rattling of the cornstalks,

the crows whose shadows pooled on the ground
after their bodies had risen, the sun, which

never again appeared that day, the eyes
that were the only sign of a soul I could see . . .

I tried to hear where the hum was coming from
and, kneeling between the anonymous stalks,

I thought my ear was cusped at the source of sound,
the joy a slow and steady rising,

a lightness in the wind's song I knew could last
for as long as I stayed

out-of-doors, where things were not bereft, and fixed
beyond imagining.

Torn-open animals stunned on shelves.
Litter of screens, bottles of dye.

Inside, Hap's wife Maggie
asks what I want to play.

I say, "Gin rummy."
My mother looked so lovely

as, balanced on the porch rail,
she shifted in her shawl.

I remember everything about the day
except not breathing, except

the story of my tense heaving chest,
I, who have apprenticed myself to origins.

—Mark Rudman

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picture. Lewis said, "Jesus Christ," and he left our company in anger. Mariah held out her arms and hugged all four of her children together in a big embrace and said to me, "I'm sorry."

I thought, Why apologize for a swine? And then I wondered when I had come to think of Lewis as a swine: I had always liked him; he had always been kind to me. And then I knew: he made Mariah cry, and I had taken her side; that was something I would always do. And I could see the manner in which Lewis had left her. It was he who was really leaving, but he would never come right out and tell her so. He was the sort of person—a cultivated man, usually—who cannot speak his mind. It wasn't that speaking frankly had been bred out of him; it was just that a man in his position always knew exactly what he wanted, and so everything was done for him. Sometimes he and I would play a game of checkers. I was pretty good at this game, but I could never beat him. His strategy was to attack in an underhanded way; and, no matter what, I would oblige him by blundering into defeat. Afterward he was kind enough to show me where I had gone wrong. "Sorry," he would say, "next time," but next time was just the same. He was too clever, that man, and too used to getting his way. He would leave her, but he would make her think that it was she who was leaving him. The children were no longer in the room. Her mouth opened. I knew what she would say before she said it. She said, "I am going to ask Lewis to leave." She looked at me with concern on her face; she put out a hand to me, offering me support. But I was fine. I would not have married a man like Lewis.

I was lying in bed one night. The children were already asleep. The house was quiet. I had draped a small square of false silk over my bedside lamp, and it made the room into a mingling of early dusk and the last remains of a faraway sunset. This reminded me of home, and a peculiar feeling came over me, a combination of happy excitement, expectation, and dread. All around me on the walls of my room were photographs I had taken, in black and white, of the children with Mariah, of Mariah all by herself, and of some of the things I had acquired since leaving home. I had no photographs of Lewis and no photographs of myself. I was trying to imitate the mood of the photographs in the book Mariah had given me, and though in that regard I failed completely, I was pleased with them all the same. I had a picture of the children eating toasted marshmallows; a picture of them with their bottoms facing the camera—their way of showing me how disgusted they were with requests for more smiles; a picture of Mariah in the middle of an elaborate preparation of chicken and vegetables cooked slowly in red wine; a picture of my dresser top with my dirty panties and lipstick, an unused sanitary napkin, and an open pocketbook scattered about; a picture of a necklace made of strange seeds, which I had bought from a woman on the street; a picture of a vase I had bought at the museum, a reproduction of one found at the site of a lost civilization. Why is a picture of something real eventually more exciting than the thing itself? I did not yet know the answer to that. I was lying there in a state of no state, almost as if under ether, thinking nothing, feeling nothing. It is a bad way to be—your spirit feels the void and will summon something to come in, usually something bad.

There was a knock, and the door opened. It was Mariah. Someone was there to see me. From the way she said it, I could tell it wasn't someone she knew; I could tell it wasn't good news. I followed Mariah into the living room and saw seated there, in a chair that had too much stuffing, a familiar face, the face of Maude Quick, only now she was a woman. She was still a bully—I could see it in her thick frame, which matched the chair she sat in. When she saw me, she stood, growing up and out. She said my name, and I felt as if all the earth's gravity had been gathered and made to center only on me; I was reduced to a tiny speck that weighed a world. She said that she had been home for a few weeks and had returned only yesterday. She said, "Here," and she gave me a blue envelope that had stamped on it "PAR AVION," and my name and address written in my mother's handwriting. She said, "Your mother asked me to give you this." She said, "Your father died a month ago now." She said, "It happened all of a sudden. His heart just gave out." She said, "You know, his heart always gave him trouble."

I was silent. I remained silent for a long time. I was thinking, Look at how pleased with herself this person is. I was thinking, Everything she has ever done has brought her such satisfaction: eating, especially eating, sleeping, telling me the things she has just told me.

She said, "Your mother is so sad you never answer her letters. Perhaps you never receive them."

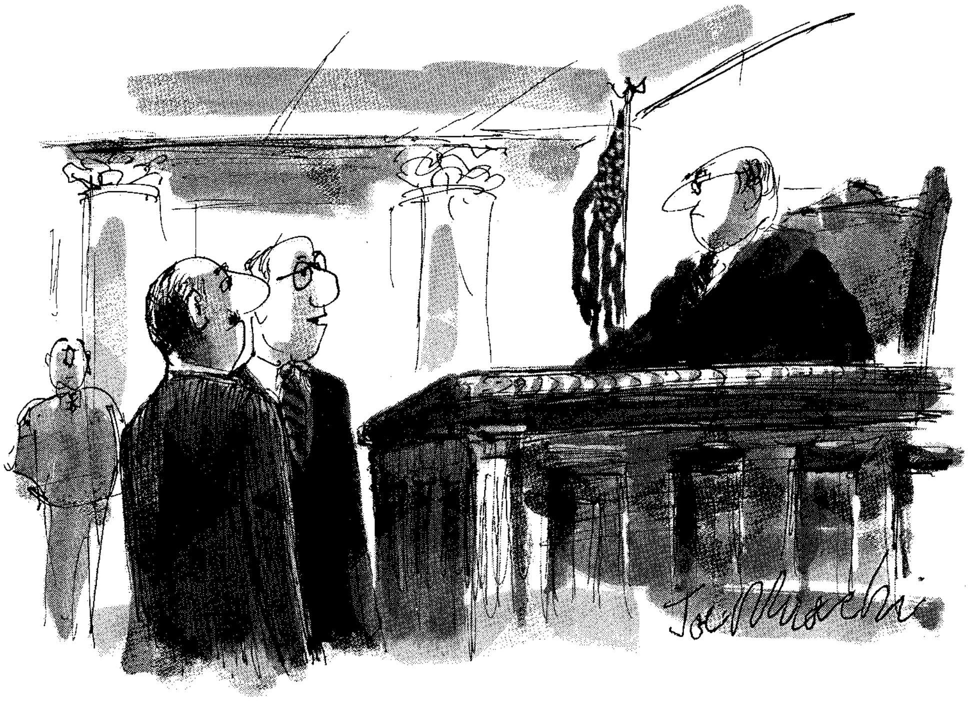
Mariah had not left the room; she had been standing a little bit away from where we were standing. She now came and stood beside me and placed one arm around my shoulders, and with the other she held on to my two hands; she drew me close to her. She must have known that I was about to break apart, and what she was doing was holding me together in one piece, like the series of tin bands that hold a box of goods together if it is being sent far overseas. I sat still in silence. My head ached, my eyes ached, my mouth was dry but I could not swallow, my throat ached, inside my ears was the sound of waves wanting to break free but only dashing themselves against a wall of rocks. I could not cry. I could not speak. I was trying to get the muscles in my face to do what I wanted them to do, trying to gain control over myself.

Maude laughed, a small laugh, the laugh of someone who did not even have to make an effort to be correct. She said, "You remind me of Miss Annie, you really remind me of your mother."

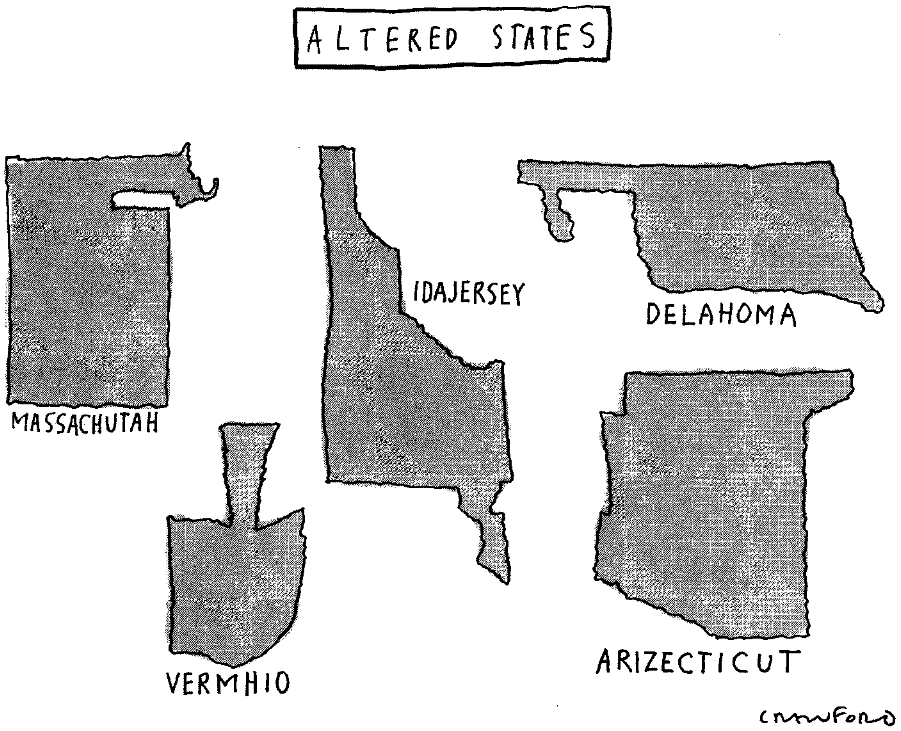
I was dying, and she saved my life. I shall always be grateful to her for that. She could not have known that in one careless sentence she said the only thing that could keep me alive. I said, "I am not like my mother. She and I are not alike. She should not have married my father. She should not have had children. She should not have thrown away her intelligence. She should not have paid so little attention to mine. She should have ignored someone like you. I am not like her at all."

It's possible I said all of this in ancient Greek, for Maude only looked at me and smiled. Mariah left the room—to make us some tea, she said. I sat down. I said, this time in English, "You are looking very well, Maude," and she said, "Yes, I always follow the advice my mother gave me. When I was leaving home for the first time, my mother said to me, 'Maude, eat all your meals at the same time every day. Make sure of that.' " At that point I was beyond even silently heaping scorn on such an incredible piece of nonsense.

Of course she urged me to return home immediately. I made no reply to that, I made no reply to anything she said. She left after bestowing on me her benediction of an embrace; apart from everything else, she left behind her the smell of clove, lime, and rose oil, and this scent almost made me die of homesickness. My mother used to bathe me in water in which the leaves and flowers of these plants had been boiled; this bath was to protect me from evil spirits



"Your Honor, my client pleads guilty to an overzealous but well-intentioned pursuit of the profit motive."



sent to me by some of the women who had loved my father and whom he had not loved in return.

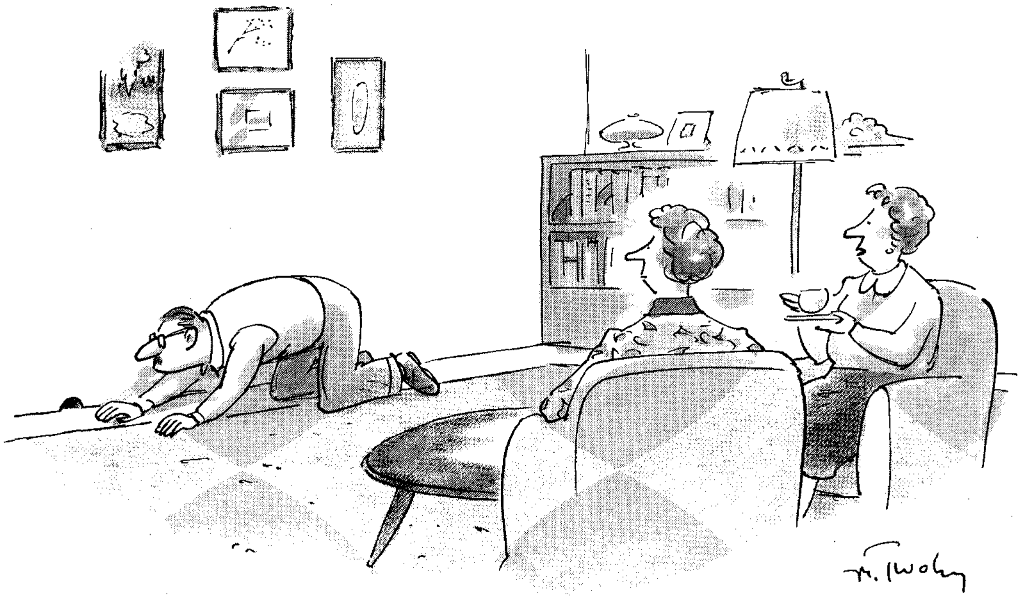
And how did this business of not returning this love all these women showered on him get started? His mother, after asking his father to bring him up, left for England. He last heard from her when he was twelve years old. She had sent him a pair of shoes for Christmas, black with small holes that made a decorative pattern at the front; they were too big for him when he received them, and so he put them away, but when he next tried them on he had outgrown them. He still had them in his safe, where he kept his money and other private things, and every once in a while he would show them to me. He never told me what she looked like, except that she was a beautiful woman. He would also say that she was a kind woman, but even then I thought he was just speaking to a child and so couldn't tell the real story, his real feelings; for how could a woman be called kind when she had left her own child at five years old, and just to get on a boat and sail away? He never saw her again, and when he told me about her he had no idea if she was dead or alive. When he was seven, his father left him with his grandmother and went off to build the Panama Canal. My father never saw his father again, either. He and his grandmother slept in the same bed. She used to get up a little before he did to prepare his breakfast, the same routine my mother used to follow and must have followed until he died. One morning his grandmother didn't awake before him, and when he finally awoke he realized that she was lying next to him dead. "She must have died in the middle of the night and I never knew," he would say to me. He never said his grandmother was beautiful or kind, but I could see that she had been devoted to him. My mother was devoted to him. She was devoted to her duties: a clean house, delicious food for us, a clean yard, a small garden of herbs and vegetables, the washing and ironing of our clothes. He must have loved my mother, for he married her—the only woman he married. I long ago thought he married her for her youth and strength, the way someone else would marry for money. He was such a clever man.

I had been holding on so hard to the letter Maude had brought that it had become a part of my body, and I no longer noticed it. When I did, I prayed hard to be indifferent to whatever it might say. I opened it. It repeated the things I already knew. My father had died. It was a month or so ago now. Though for a long time he had suffered from a weak heart, still it was unexpected. I must please come home immediately. But there was something new. My father had died leaving my mother a pauper. He had no money. His safe, where he kept the shoes his mother had sent him and other things valuable to him and where he also kept money, had no money in it. When she went to the bank, his account had no money in it. His account at his gentlemen's lodge had no money in it. He had borrowed so much against his insurance policy that perhaps he owed his insurance company money, and my mother was now responsible for that. My mother had to borrow money to bury him, and because she was a member in good standing the church provided the service for free.

I had been putting away some money for the apartment Peggy and I were planning to share; I took it all and sent it to my mother. Mariah, on hearing this, gave me double what I already had sent, and I sent this along, too. I wrote my mother a letter; it was a cold letter. It matched my heart. It amazed even me, but I sent it all the same. In the letter I asked my mother how she could have married a man who would die and leave her in debt even for his own burial. I pointed out the ways she had betrayed herself. I said I believed she had betrayed me also, and that I knew it to be true even if I couldn't find a concrete example right then. I said that she had acted like a saint, but that since I was living in this real world I had really wanted just a mother. I reminded her that my whole upbringing had been devoted to preventing me from becoming a slut; I then gave a brief description of my personal life, offering each detail as evidence that my upbringing had been a failure and that, in fact, life as a slut was quite enjoyable, thank you. I would not come home now, I said. I would not come home ever.

To all this the saint replied that she would always love me, she would always be my mother, my home would never be anywhere but with her. I burned this letter, along with all the others I had tied up in a neat little bundle that had been resting on my dresser, in Lewis and Mariah's fireplace.

ONE night, very late, Mariah and I were again sitting in the kitchen. She seemed young and light, I seemed old and leaden. We recognized our present state to be a response to our different situations: she, husbandless; I, fatherless. It was as if we had been reading the last sentences of a very long



"Irv has always been faithful, and he's a good mouser."

• •

paragraph and after that the page turned blank. Lewis had left her, but she really thought she had asked him to leave. She said they were getting a divorce; she said the children were in a state of confusion and she was worried about their well-being; she said she felt free. I meant to tell her not to bank on this "free" feeling, that it would vanish like a magic trick; but instead I told her of a ride I had taken to the country with Paul that afternoon. Paul had wanted to show me an old mansion in ruins, formerly the home of a man who had made a great deal of money in the part of the world that I was from, in the sugar industry. I did not know this man, but if he hadn't been already dead I would have wished him so. As we drove along, Paul spoke of the great explorers who had crossed the great seas, not only to find riches, he said, but to feel free; and this search for freedom was part of the whole human situation. Until that moment I had no idea that he had such a hobby—freedom. Along the side of the road were dead animals—deer, raccoons, badgers, squirrels—that had been trying to get from one side to the other when fast-moving cars put a stop to them. I tried to put a light note in my voice as I said to him, "Some people find riches, some people find death," but I did not succeed.

When I finished telling Mariah this, she was silent for a while, and then she said, "Why don't you forgive your mother for whatever it is you feel she has done? Why don't you just go home and tell her you forgive her?" Each word, as she said it, stood out as if it were a separate entity, carved in something solid, something bitter and solid. Her words made me remember how it was that I came to hate my mother, and with the memory came a flood of tears that tasted as if they were juice squeezed from an aloe plant. I was not an only child, but it was almost as if I were ashamed of this, because I had never told anyone, not even Mariah. I was an only child until I was nine years old, and then in the space of five years my mother had three male children; each time a new child was born, my mother and father announced to each other with great seriousness that the new child would go to university in England and study to become a doctor or lawyer or someone who would occupy an important and influential position in society. I did not mind my father saying these things about his sons, his own kind, and leaving me out. My father did not know me at all; I did not expect him to imagine a life for me filled with excitement and triumph. But my mother knew me well, as well as she knew herself: I, at the time, even thought of us as identical; and whenever I saw her eyes fill up with tears at the thought of how proud she would be at some deed her sons had accomplished, I felt a sword go through my heart, for there was no accompanying scenario in which she saw me, her only identical offspring, in a remotely similar situation. To myself I then began to call her Mrs. Judas, and I began to plan a separation from her that even then I suspected would never be complete.

As I was telling Mariah all these things, all sorts of little details of my life on the island where I grew up came back to me: the color of six o'clock in the evening sky on the day I went to call the midwife to assist my mother in the birth of my first brother; the white of the chemise that my mother embroidered for the birth of my second brother; the redness of the red ants that attacked my third brother as he lay in bed next to my mother a day after he was born; the navy blue of the sailor suit my first brother wore when my father took him to a cricket match; the absence of red lipstick on my mother's mouth after they were all born; the day the men from the prison in their black-and-white jail clothes came to cut down a plum tree that grew in our yard, because one of my brothers had almost choked to death swallowing whole a plum he picked up from the ground.

I suddenly had to stop speaking; my mouth was empty, my tongue had collapsed into my throat. I thought I would turn to stone just then. Mariah wanted to rescue me. She spoke of women in society, women in history, women in culture, women everywhere. But I couldn't speak, so I couldn't tell her that my mother was my mother and that society and history and culture and other women in general were something else altogether.

Mariah left the room and came back with a large book and opened it to the first chapter. She gave it to me. I read the first sentence. "Woman? Very simple, say the fanciers of simple formulas: she is a womb, an ovary; she is a female—this word is sufficient to define her." I had to stop. Mariah had completely misinterpreted my situation. My life could not really be explained by this thick book that made my hands hurt as I tried to keep it open. My life was at once something more simple and more complicated than that: for ten of my nineteen years I had been mourning the end of a love affair, perhaps the only true love in my whole life I would ever know. —JAMAICA KINCAID

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

BETWEEN DICTATORSHIP AND ANARCHY

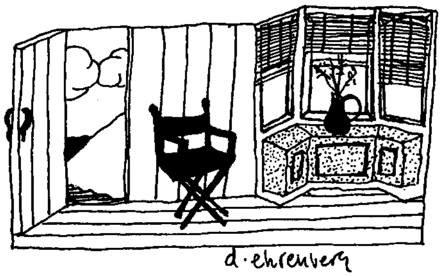
WHEN Mikhail Gorbachev stood on the broad, gray-carpeted platform of the Kremlin's Palace of Congresses on March 15th, placed his right hand on a dark-red binder that held the newly amended Soviet Constitution, and recited the Presidential oath to his hushed parliament, he was actually inaugurating himself. There was no official with higher authority than he to administer the oath, no embodiment of a durable constitutionality that could transcend the vicissitudes of mortal leadership. And so he had to memorize the oath and swear himself in as the Soviet Union's first President, all the while touching the tips of his fingers to a constitution that was far from sacred in his country but that he now professed to believe could be made the foundation of a democratic system.

The brief ceremony symbolized the ambivalence of the Soviet Union's schizophrenic struggle against its own history. Gorbachev, standing alone behind a polished wooden table, was the solitary focus of all the hopes and anxieties of liberals and conservatives, of those who wished or worried that he would bring political pluralism, of those who wished or worried that he would return to authoritarianism. Before him in the vast hall sat more than two thousand members of the Congress of People's Deputies, who had been chosen in semi-competitive elections a year earlier and had, in turn, elected from their ranks the full-time legislature, the Supreme Soviet. Now, in their third session, the deputies had just spent three days debating the twin fears that gripped their nation—the fear of dictatorship and the fear of anarchy. Gorbachev had navigated skillfully between these fears, showing both the conciliatory and the autocratic sides of his personality, and reinforcing even his critics' conviction that at this juncture he was irreplaceable. No candidates were willing to oppose him, and the Congress elected him for a five-year term.

At the same time, however, the Constitution lay in a revered place on the table, beneath Gorbachev's hand. This was not quite the mockery it would have been a few years earlier, for in creating the new post of President the Congress had also placed constitutional limits on executive authority by introducing the principle of the separation of powers. At least on paper, this established for the first time in Soviet history a balance between the executive and the legislative branches of government—precisely the mechanism used by the drafters of the United States Constitution to guard against tyranny and open the way to pluralistic politics.

Like Russia under the czars, the Soviet Union under the Communist Party had never codified the allocation of political powers. The Party and the government were parallel structures of authority, with the Party dominant and the Party's General Secretary the effective leader of the nation, possessing powers that were unstated and unrestricted by law. With no fixed term of office and no mechanism of succession, he ruled as long as he was able to control the Party's Politburo and the inner circle of the Party's Central Committee; politics took place in secret. Of the six previous Soviet leaders, only Nikita Khrushchev was ousted during his lifetime; the others managed to remain in office until they died. Successors were chosen by intrigue.

Now Gorbachev was trying to transfer political authority from the Party to the government—a delicate exercise that involved reducing the Party's day-to-day administrative role, ending the ban on competing political parties, and establishing a strong Presidency. In theory, a complete transition would mean that his real power would derive from his position as President rather than as General Secretary of the Communist Party, a post that may be abolished during or after the Party Congress that is scheduled for July. Then, having insulated himself from any palace coup by the disgruntled Party hierarchy, Gorbachev would be vulnerable only to the transparent democratic process.



The constitutional amendments approved in March by the Congress of People's Deputies contain the seeds of a pluralistic system. Beginning with the expiration of Gorbachev's current term, in 1995, a President is to be chosen every five years by all the voters in general elections. Only citizens between the ages of thirty-five and sixty-five may run (Gorbachev will then be sixty-four)—a provision that should eliminate the gerontocracy that ruled in the past. No President may serve more than two terms. A succession mechanism, designed to minimize back-room scrambling for power, names the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet as next in line (now Anatoly Lukyanov, a longtime Gorbachev friend and colleague) and then the Chairman of the Council of Ministers (now Nikolai Ryzhkov, who has resisted some of Gorbachev's efforts at economic reform). Either would serve for no more than three months; then a new election would be held.

The President may be impeached, for violating the law or the Constitution, by a two-thirds vote of the Congress of People's Deputies, which normally meets twice a year. His vetoes of legislation may be overridden by a two-thirds vote of the Supreme Soviet, which also has the power, if it becomes independent-minded, to restrict the President's ability to issue decrees or declare states of emergency. The legislature may vote no confidence in the Council of Ministers, requiring its members to step aside. Article Six, which confirmed the Communist Party as "the leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system," was revised in March to permit the participation of "other political parties."

These are momentous changes for a system that has never honored the rule of law, and for a culture that has been psychologically dependent on imperious edicts from above. Liberal legislators, clustering in knots of conversation during the frequent intermissions in the Congress, muttered anxiously about their lack of traditions, cautioning one another and the Western correspondents who buzzed around them that putting an amendment into the Constitution was not the same as putting it into reality—especially not in this country. I recalled for one deputy a tale I had heard in the nineteen-seventies about a Soviet human-rights activist who was greeted with wry amusement during a K.G.B. interrogation when he cited his rights under the Soviet Constitution. "Please," the K.G.B. man said with a weary smile, "we're having a serious conversation."

The deputy also smiled wearily. He had a story of his own, whether apocryphal or true I'm still not sure. It was of two Soviet deputies having a talk.

"What we need in the Soviet Union is a democracy like Sweden's," the first declared.

"It will never work here," the second said.

"Why not?"

"We don't have enough Swedes."

"Can I have Mr. Hall call you back? He's with a candy apple."

• •

ON the weekend before the Congress of People's Deputies gathered as a kind of constitutional convention, the Interregional Deputies' Group, comprising about four hundred mostly liberal, pro-democratic members, held a meeting to express their concern over the strong powers to be vested in the Presidency. It was a drizzly Saturday as some three hundred of them gathered in an auditorium in a modern government office building, which had been turned over to the deputies by a bureaucracy that had been whittled down by Gorbachev's cost-cutting campaign. At least, lawmakers now had some office space, but filling it with secretaries, aides, and experts who could pry information out of the executive branch was still a dream. Consequently, many in the Interregional Group had to struggle against a sense of powerlessness as they tried to become a liberal opposition to Gorbachev, with the aim of pushing him further and faster toward the open society that they, and perhaps he, envisioned.

The group had created in public something of the atmosphere of irreverence which used to prevail in dissidents' kitchens during the nineteen-seventies. From a table in the lobby of the office building, budding journalists were selling independent newspapers and leaflets, produced on desktop computers and filled with open letters to Gorbachev, essays on the inefficiencies of socialism, and texts of proposed laws that were not printed in the official press. Biting political cartoons had made an appearance as well. One, posted on a door to the lobby, pictured a man in chains under the headline "We Have Nothing to Lose but Our Chains." A heavy shackle around the man's neck was labelled "K.G.B."; one around his left wrist "M.V.D.," the Russian initials for the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which runs the police; one on his right wrist "Mafia"; and one around his waist "Propaganda." The chain was fastened to a heavy ball marked "K.P.S.S."—the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The meeting began with a minute of silence to recognize the emptiness left by the death last December of Andrei Sakharov, whose determined defense of human rights had propelled him into the Congress, where he had quickly become the most notable voice of the Interregional Group. His absence deprived the group of a dependable moral compass, but a sense of direction and purpose was gradually being provided by others—particularly a new breed of pragmatic champions of Western constitutionalism, who lobbied effectively enough to wrench important compromises from Gorbachev. This was the beginning of real politics, played quietly beneath an extravagant rhetoric.

Although members of the Interregional Group had proposed the creation of a Presidency last summer and had encountered opposition from Gorbachev then, Gorbachev had suddenly reversed field and alarmed them by coming up with a Presidential proposal of his own—a version that in its original form would have given the President practically unlimited authority to issue decrees, declare states of emergency, and impose martial law. Yuri Afanasyev, a historian who has taken to criticizing Lenin after years of lecturing obediently on the virtues of Marxism-Leninism, told the group's meeting that Presidential powers should be spelled out only in the context of an entirely new constitution, which is expected within the next several years. He and his colleagues also opposed the plan to have the first President elected by the Congress rather than by the voters at large. "The election of the President should be the result of a normal political struggle," he declared. He warned of a "renewal of Stalinism and Russian imperialism," and denounced the current power arrangement as "an oligarchy, like a junta." Noting that the K.G.B. had not been eliminated, he observed that "all the mechanisms are in place" for political oppression. "Mikhail Sergeyevich trusts that we will not suffer from his authority," he said, using Gorbachev's patronymic, in the usual Russian style. "But we do not accept strong executive power. We are sad that Mikhail Sergeyevich has gone this way in the last months. It is a tragedy of demagoguery."

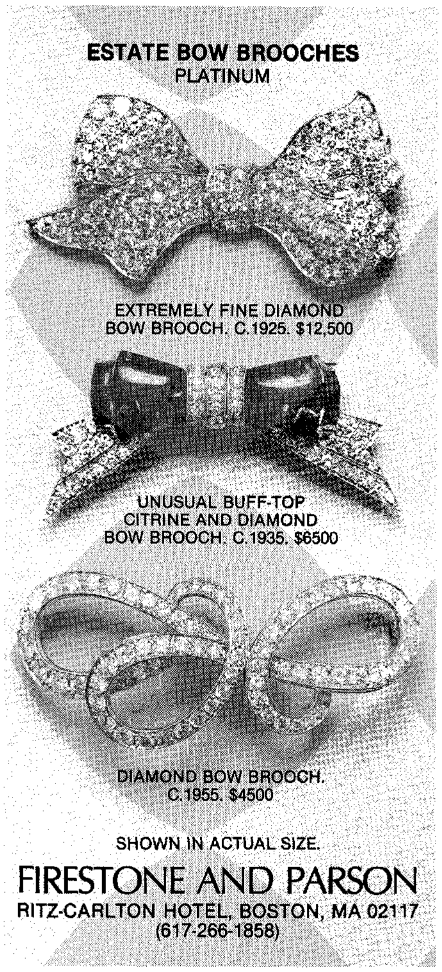
The auditorium was overflowing, with people sitting in the aisles and around the edges of the hall, listening carefully. But as the day progressed it became clear that the group was neither cohesive nor well organized, and that many of its members preferred making speeches to making politics. During a break, I asked Afanasyev what he was doing to influence deputies who were not in the group. He looked puzzled and said he didn't understand the question. I pointed out that today they were talking only to themselves. Since they basically agreed with one another, did they have plans to lobby deputies who might also be worried about excessive Presidential power but weren't part of the Interregional Group? "We have no such plans," he said. "That would be useless."

The basic rift in the Interregional Group seemed to run along this line between denunciation and politics. It was dramatized during a speech by Sergei Stankevich, a thirty-six-year-old political scientist who looks about twenty. He outlined his sometimes successful efforts to get compromises written into the draft provisions on the Presidency, but as he was describing a proposal for limiting the power to declare a state of emergency he was interrupted by a cry from the middle of the hall. The outburst came from Telman Gdlyan, a former prosecutor, who has contended (without producing any credible evidence) that corruption reaches into the Politburo. Gdlyan rose to his feet and argued impatiently that all this talk about legal details missed the point, because the issue was not what powers the President would have but whether the Congress should elect a President at all. A President, he said, should be elected only by the people. This assertion drew a meticulously pragmatic reply from Stankevich, who had done his doctoral dissertation on the United States Congress and has made six trips to Washington in the last four years to study the institution at first hand. "We are going to lose," he told Gdlyan bluntly. There would be no victory in opposing the concept of a President elected by the Congress of People's Deputies, he said. "We are in no position to go to elections now." Stankevich had a different idea: let the Congress elect the first President, but only for a term of two or three years, not five, and then, in 1992 or 1993, hold a general election. A few days later, he tried to put this proposal to the Congress, only to be outmaneuvered by Gorbachev.

Stankevich told me later that Gdlyan and Afanasyev were in the more combative of two main factions of the Interregional Group. "One bloc is the aggressive opposition to Gorbachev," he said. "They consider Gorbachev almost a dictator. They try to fight against Gorbachev in almost every case. They are suspicious of him, and they consider all his moves steps toward dictatorship. Another group is the constructive opposition, and I'm involved in this. We believe that Gorbachev moves slowly, inconsistently, with some hesitation, and that we should criticize him. He is our opponent but not our enemy. We think we should criticize him, but support him when he moves in the right direction, and even support him against the right wing." Many in the group, he went on, disliked the radical speeches of Afanasyev, who seemed unable to participate in real politics. "His main role is as a political speaker," Stankevich said. "But it's important to have such politicians." It is important even for Gorbachev, who now stands in the center of a political spectrum that has shifted to the left; he has become the pivot in the balance between liberals and hard-liners.

THE Palace of Congresses, built under Khrushchev, is the only modern-looking building in the Kremlin; its upper stories with their light-gray façade and large glass windows rise discordantly above the fifteenth-century red brick Kremlin battlements. It houses a huge auditorium with white ceilings, walls of blond wood, seats upholstered in red, and a backdrop bearing an enormous profile of Lenin against streaming red sunbeams. That was Lenin's most dominating appearance at the Congress; otherwise, he was practically ignored, his name never given the prominent mention that once characterized pompous speeches in that hall.

One of the first references to Lenin,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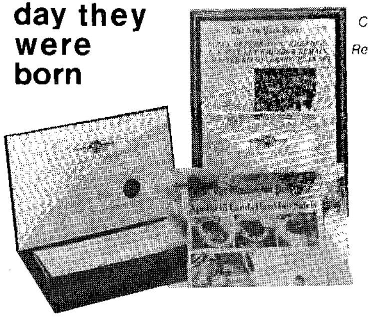

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shortly after the Congress convened, on the morning of Monday, March 12th, was an attack by Yuri Afanasyev, which angered most of the deputies and probably lost the Interregional Group some votes in its efforts to restrict the powers of the Presidency. One liberal felt compelled to address the Congress later with an assurance that Afanasyev's assault did not represent the views of the group. For many in that hall, at least, Lenin remained an icon; it was legally permissible to criticize him but still impolitic.

Afanasyev is a serious, stocky, ruddy-faced man with short gray hair. He does not mince words, and Gorbachev is said to detest him. When he gripped the large dark-wood lectern and, facing the sea of deputies, spoke in deep, measured tones, Gorbachev was seated on the dais behind him, presiding over the session, with a look of faint displeasure on his face. "We believe that the hasty attempt to institutionalize the Presidency at this Congress is a gross and grievous political error," Afanasyev declared. He outlined the liberals' objections: the rush to create a Presidency before the drafting of an entirely new constitution; the election of the first President by the Congress instead of by the people; the weakness of the Supreme Soviet as a legislative balance against executive power; the formidable authority possessed by one man heading both the government and the Party; the lack of a free press. "Many of the deputies from the Interregional Group are convinced that the country's policy under the guidance of Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev has recently been erroneous and dangerous," he said. The cause of tensions in the society was "not the absence of power but the absence of trust in this power." Then he turned to Lenin. "Force—the use of force, violence—is what our entire history is about," Afanasyev said, his voice booming. "If our leader and founder laid the foundations of anything, it was the institutionalization of the state policy of mass violence and terror."

It took a moment for the words to sink in. Then an angry rumble came from the hall.

Gorbachev interrupted, from behind. "You have one minute left."

"And besides that," Afanasyev continued, "he also institutionalized the principle of lawlessness as a state policy. This was true through the entire Stalinist period, and it created many victims. It went through the Brezhnev period, when in a drunken stupor the national wealth was squandered wholesale and retail. And now it is suggested that we continue with this, according to tradition."

"You're out of time," Gorbachev said. It had been a rather short minute —thirty-five seconds, to be exact.

"I'm out of time?" Afanasyev replied. "I would ask you for one more minute. One more minute, please."

"Comrades, shall we give him one more minute?" Gorbachev asked.

"*Nyet!*" came a shout, in unison. Gorbachev had the answer he wanted. Afanasyev left the podium.

It was the first of Gorbachev's many displays of procedural cunning during the four days of deliberations. Seated with the rest of the Presidium behind and slightly above the speaker's lectern, Gorbachev kept a sharp watch on the assembly, sensing when to turn off debate that was drifting into uncomfortable areas, deftly burying unwelcome proposals by never putting them to a vote, inviting his claque in the orchestra seats to shout their "*Da*"s or "*Nyet*"s, and manipulating the Congress's agenda to suit his own. Although an occasional objection was raised by deputies, most of them were unschooled in parliamentary procedure, and seemed dazzled or bewildered by his sleight of hand. Gorbachev was charming, engaging, quick, and tough. "I think he would have given Sam Rayburn a run for his money," said David Remnick, of the Washington *Post*, as we watched from the press gallery.

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Gorbachev's maneuvers were facilitated by the composition of the Congress of People's Deputies, which may be more conservative than the Soviet population at large. The electoral system under which deputies were chosen for five-year terms, in the spring of 1989, was designed to introduce a modicum of democracy without dispossessing the ruling establishment. One-third of the twenty-two hundred and fifty seats were reserved for representatives of organizations such as the Communist Party, the Academy of Sciences, the Union of Writers, and official trade unions, and so gave members of the élite two, three, or four votes each, depending on how many organizations they belonged to. Cumbersome nominating procedures filtered out numerous liberal candidates for the remaining fifteen hundred seats, whose occupants were actually elected by the people. Of those, three hundred and eighty-four ran unopposed, and although the procedure allowed voters to defeat a lone candidate by crossing his name off the ballot (subjecting a few city Party secretaries and military officers to humiliating elimination), the overwhelming majority of this group slid easily into office. That left just under half of the twenty-two hundred and fifty seats to be filled by popular vote in truly competitive elections. The Congress then elected five hundred and forty-two of its members to the Supreme Soviet, the standing, bicameral legislature, which has gradually become more willing than the Congress itself to resist pressure from Gorbachev and his colleagues.

As skewed as the corps of deputies may be, however, their speeches during the March session of the Congress did reflect the concerns of the public—both the fear of dictatorship and the fear of anarchy. Conservative members of the Communist apparatus sounded law-and-order themes, like delegates to a Republican Convention. This was partly for the home audience. The Congress agreed to have its proceedings televised, but not live, as the first meeting had been. Those daytime transmissions had proved so much more entertaining than most people's jobs that nationwide production fell by twenty per cent during the session. Now the meeting was videotaped for evening broadcasts, and those kept fascinated citizens up until two-thirty or three o'clock in the morning. Nobody calculated the loss of worker efficiency due to sleeplessness.

Rising crime, rampant corruption, ethnic violence, the obliteration of shared values—all these were themes of discussion, both in Moscow apartments and in the Kremlin. At a time of waning autocracy, amid the evaporation of the Party's police power and the decay of the fractious Soviet Union, the spectre of chaos haunted many deputies. It was a fear with deep resonance

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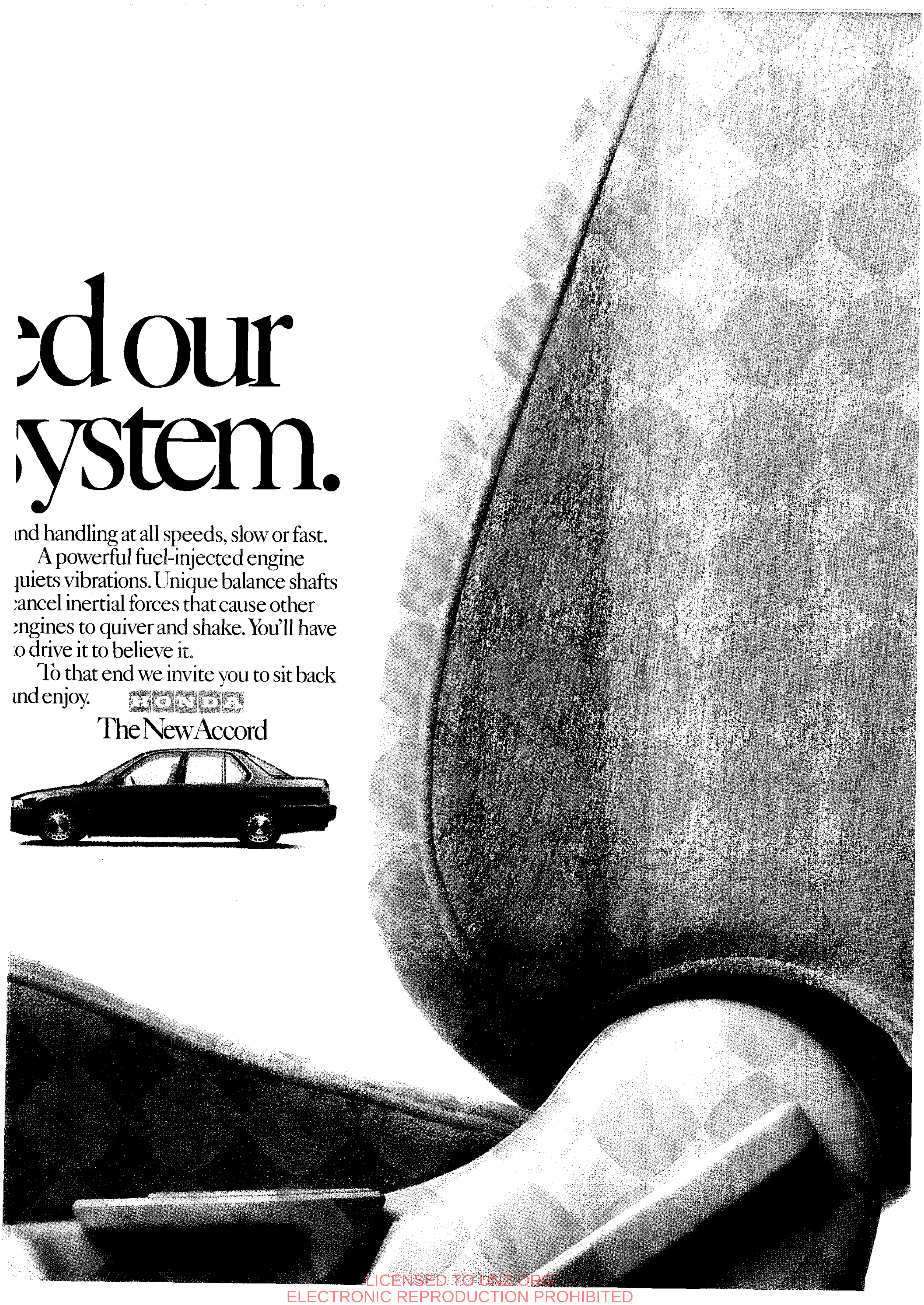

in Russian history, where there seemed to be no authority without authoritarianism, no order without oppression, no change without upheaval. That was what attracted many to the concept of a strong Presidency, to fill the power vacuum that many felt had consumed the leadership and would soon consume them all. The word "anarchy" was pronounced as often in that hall as the name "Lenin" used to be.

The timing of the Congress increased the jittery feeling that things were coming apart. On its normal schedule, it would not have been convened until June or so; Gorbachev called the "extraordinary" session to rush his Presidency into law. He had just engineered an agreement by the Central Committee to abandon the Party's monopoly on power and permit a multiparty system, and he needed a revamped governmental structure immediately. Furthermore, tensions among some of the fifteen Soviet republics had become acute, making a reassertion of authority in the center seem necessary. In January, Azerbaijani Muslims went from apartment to apartment in their capital of Baku, attacking Armenian Christians and driving them out of their homes. That set off a spasm of ethnic violence with Armenia and a threat of Azerbaijani secession, which prompted Gorbachev to dispatch Soviet troops to Baku. Well-televised protests by Russian mothers who didn't want their sons sent to the region forced the Defense Ministry to rescind a call-up of reserves. Then, in February, rumors that Armenian refugees were getting choice housing ignited riots in the Central Asian republics of Tadzhikistan and Kirghizia. And in March, on the day before the Congress convened, the newly elected Supreme Soviet of Lithuania declared the republic independent, causing Gorbachev to open the session with an expression of alarm. (A month after the session, he cut off Lithuania's fuel supplies.) Throughout the country, the economy was in chaos, and organized crime raged. The first round of local elections in the Russian Republic, on March 4th, showed that the worst liability a candidate could have was a background as a Communist Party official, and the most helpful credential that of having been a political prisoner.

It was no wonder, then, that many of the deputies who gathered on the morning of March 12th were ready to believe dire predictions of what would happen if they did not approve a strong Presidency. They listened attentively as Gorbachev's old law-school friend Anatoly Lukyanov, who was soon to become the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, described the rationale of the proposal and its legal details.

It would take a long time to develop the society's "political culture," Lukyanov conceded. "Legal nihilism, neglect of the rights of the individual, and distrust of authority have become deeply rooted," he said. "It is precisely because of this that there arise outbursts of extremism and national fanaticism, the susceptibility of whole social groups to primitive manipulation, instances of anarchy, and uncivilized, violent ways of settling social and other conflicts. It is precisely here that one can find the source of destabilizing, explosive processes, and of the stresses that burden the people's life and psyche."

Lukyanov is not a rousing speaker. He is a figure of unremitting grayness, like the colorless Moscow streets in March. But he managed a few nice Orwellian twists, which had reporters scribbling in their notebooks. "Anything resembling democracy is unthinkable without responsibility," he said. "So both self-government and decentralization can properly realize their positive potential only in the presence of—should the need arise—strong, effectively functioning, integrating, and coördinating central power. Here it is highly appropriate that we should avail ourselves of Lenin's advice that just as 'collegiality is needed for the discussion of fundamental issues, so it is equally necessary that a single individual should have responsibility and executive power so that there is no red tape and no evasion of responsibility.' "

In the interest of balancing power, that was not very comforting to hear from the future head of the legislature. One was left to wonder whether he appreciated how messy and inefficient democracy would be, and whether he had ever heard of Winston Churchill's famous line, delivered to the House of Commons in 1947: "No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

Others in the Congress that morning were openly fearful of parliamentary authority. Sergei Alekseyev, a lawyer, who heads the Constitutional Supervisory Commission, declared ominously, "We find ourselves in a position where there is a paralysis of power. Power has not been functioning. Parliamentary proceedings may block the decision-making process and bring policy-making to a deadlock . . . This can lead to dictatorship. . . . We are late. We need strong power, without which our system will disintegrate."

The deputies and the people had been carefully prepared for the notion of a strong President. About a week before the Congress went into session, Soviet television had broadcast a documentary showing Ronald Reagan being inaugurated, François Mitterrand appearing authoritative, and Charles de Gaulle reviewing troops. "Those were very imperial images of strong-looking Western Presidents," David Remnick remarked to me. It was a curious invocation of the authority of the Western example after decades of excoriating the West.

At the Congress, each deputy was given a salmon-colored pamphlet of forty-three pages containing chapters on the Presidencies of the United States, France, Italy, Finland, India, and Mexico. The descriptions, prepared by the Soviet news agency, Tass, tended to emphasize the extent of Presidential power but not its limitations. In a way, American behavior had allowed Soviet deputies to be fed a somewhat authoritarian version of the way democracy is practiced in the United States. On the opening page, in a review of American Presidents' bypassing of the congressional power to declare war, the pamphlet said, "Undeclared wars against Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, the occupation of Grenada, Panama, and so forth testify to the fact that the war powers of the American

President are now the equivalent of the powers of a military dictator."

WHEN the Congress convened, Gorbachev probably did not have the votes—or, at least, not a safe margin—for establishing his Presidency. Since the measure took the form of a constitutional amendment, it required approval by two-thirds of the entire membership of the Congress, whether present or not. With twenty-two hundred and forty-five deputies on the rolls (five seats vacated since the elections had not been filled), fourteen hundred and ninety-seven votes were needed. Only two thousand eighty-seven deputies were in the hall to register at the opening session. That meant that to defeat the proposal just five hundred and ninety-one of them had to abstain or cast negative votes—an outcome that was not inconceivable unless the liberals could somehow be satisfied.

There had been some lobbying beforehand, and Gorbachev and his drafting commission, which included members of the Interregional Group, had already acquiesced in a few of the liberals' demands. Gorbachev agreed—and on this he got approval from the whole Congress—to divide the voting so that the question of how to elect the first President, which was a major concern of the liberals, would be considered separately from the provisions on Presidential powers. He refused to put each article and paragraph of the provisions to a separate vote, as some liberals wanted, and he hoodwinked them on an important procedural matter, as they discovered on the second day. But the preliminaries were full of compromises, and the first day was full of politicking.

Stankevich told me that about half of his proposed amendments had been accepted before the session began, including a crucial restriction on decrees. In the initial draft, the President had been given practically unlimited power to rule by decree. In the final version, this provision was cut back to require that decrees be issued only "on the basis and in fulfillment of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. and the laws of the U.S.S.R." The objective, shared by Westernizers among Gorbachev's supporters, was to make decrees comparable to executive orders from the White House, implementing laws but not changing them.

"The main control now is that all Presidential decrees should be based on laws already adopted by the Supreme Soviet," Stankevich declared triumphantly. "It is a real limitation of Presidential discretion." He added, however, that he would submit a second set of proposed amendments in writing to the drafting commission that afternoon.

During a recess, I had found Stankevich standing with a cup of coffee at a table covered in white linen—part of a vast "buffet" occupying the entire top floor of the Palace of Congresses. There was something rather bovine about the scene. When a break was called, lawmakers would pack themselves onto the escalators to be herded upstairs, and there they would stand at tall tables and eat rapidly and seriously. It was the closest thing to a fast-food place in Moscow, except for the gaudy McDonald's that had just opened near Pushkin Square. The food in the Kremlin was better: open sandwiches of red caviar, salmon, ham, or sturgeon, small cups of hot mushrooms, various fruit drinks, and absolutely no alcohol. At the end of each table stood a cashier, usually a young woman with heavy smears of rouge on her cheeks and an abacus at her elbow. The procedure was disarmingly straightforward for the Soviet Union: a hungry deputy (or reporter) just stepped up, ate what he wanted, and then told the cashier what he had taken. She added it up with a click-clack of the abacus, and he paid. If asked, some of the cashiers would also dispense some free political commentary, usually of the skeptical variety.

One of the nice things about the Congress of People's Deputies is how innocent most of the members are, so far, about the slick techniques of television. Few of them are telegenic. They don't know how to embrace the camera with their eyes or how to speak in weasel words. Most of them are natural, direct, and genuine. They don't mind stumbling and picking up again, or rearranging a thought, or handing out an unpopular criticism. The authenticity spills into personal contacts off camera, just as the television polish of congressmen in Washington tends to give them a smooth veneer that never quite rubs off in ordinary conversation. Discovering this is like stepping through the looking glass, for the Soviet Union used to be a place where officials were remote and insincere, full of platitudes, and impossible to engage

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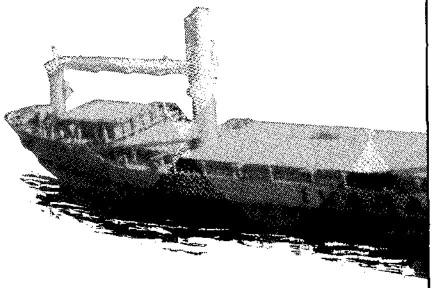

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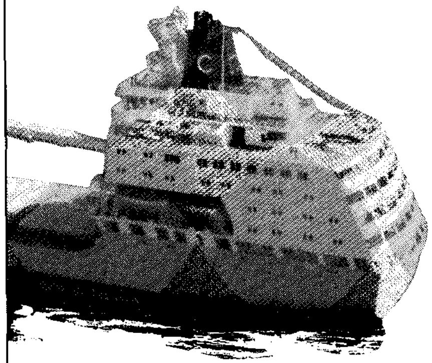

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"Sometimes I find it hard to believe that we found each other through regular channels."

• •

in real discussion. I found myself wondering how long it would take the new, impressive politicians of the Soviet Union to descend into the mediocrity that now afflicts America. Perhaps the test of a true democracy is that it can be run by mediocrities.

For a reporter, the swirl of deputies through the lobbies of the Palace of Congresses was intoxicating, with generals and writers and Party secretaries and an occasional Politburo member just there, ready to be caught. Deputies were easily identifiable by large metal lapel pins—a red flag framed in gold. "Let's go trolling," correspondents would say, and then stride off happily into the maelstrom for quick interviews before bells began to call the legislators back into session. There were seven levels of lobbies and foyers, with the buffet at the top and, at the bottom, a cramped corridor reserved for smoking, the air so choked that you could barely make out faces at the other end.

It was two floors above the smoking corridor that Yegor Ligachev made an appearance during the lunch break on Monday. At first, I heard him shouting, and it took me a moment to recognize him—a broad, tough face and a shock of white hair bathed in television lights as a crowd of reporters and cameramen pressed around him. He would walk a few paces, dragging the crowd along, stop for a few moments to shout into the microphones, and then say, "Thank you, comrades, I wish you health, successes," and walk on. He was not yelling angrily but, rather, the way a machine politician of Tammany Hall might have addressed unpleasant topics that were thrust at him—with a pugnacious smile, enjoying the combat. Ligachev is the leading conservative of the Politburo, supportive of economic reform but critical of the flagrant openness of debate about social problems and candor about history. After several attempts to turn policy toward a harder line when Gorbachev was travelling, he was demoted in 1988 from his important post, Party Secretary for ideology. But he still has a following, and today he was shouting in condemnation of Lithuania and in support of Lenin. "It seems to me that there is no greater calamity as far as the people are concerned," he said of Lithuania's declaration of independence. Of Afanasyev's criticism of Lenin he said, "This I reject! I consider that we are Communists! Lenin is not with us, but the business that he managed, that he created, we are continuing. Our Party, our Communists, defend ourselves and defend Lenin! That must be underscored particularly. Thank you, comrades. I wish you well."

Although the Congress was about the business of a constitutional system, leisurely conversations in the foyer often gravitated to Gorbachev as a political personality, as if he, and not the Constitution, were the key to the future, as might well be the case. Although one hears much griping about him—several friends of mine expressed disgust at his southern accent and his grammatical errors in Russian—few can think of an alternative. Tatyana Zaslavskaya, a deputy and sociologist, who heads the Center for the Study of Public Opinion, told me during a recess that a survey in January still gave his policies reasonably high marks. "On the question 'Do you support the political line of Gorbachev?,' forty-four per cent answered full support, and thirty-seven per cent gave basic support," she said. "In other words, eighty-one per cent gave support—a firm majority. And on the question of naming which person you admired in 1989 forty-five and a half per cent named Gorbachev. Next was Yeltsin, with sixteen and a half per cent." That was Boris Yeltsin, the flamboyant populist former Party chief in Moscow, who was removed from the Politburo after he made a scorching attack on Ligachev during a Central Committee meeting. Yeltsin's voice was conspicuously absent during the Congress. He had just returned from Italy, where he had been promoting his new book, "Against the Grain." He was shown on television attending the first day's session, but then he was rumored to have fallen ill, and did not reappear. He resurfaced in May, however, narrowly winning election as Chairman of the Russian Republic's Soviet, a powerful post from which he began to challenge Kremlin policies even while Gorbachev was in Washington for the summit. Meanwhile, polls showed Gorbachev's popularity slipping. In April, Zaslavskaya's institute found only twenty-six per cent holding a "very positive" opinion of Gorbachev and thirty-nine per cent "fairly positive."

A few feet away, I spotted Pavel Bunich, an economist, who expressed doubts that Gorbachev would be as strong a President as was necessary. "He has to move quickly," Bunich said. "If it turns out that conditions don't get better, the situation cannot remain stable."

Didn't he feel that Presidential authority should be more limited than was being proposed?

"I don't think that's needed now," he replied. "On paper he doesn't have unrestricted powers. I don't see him abusing his power, because of his personality. As you see, he is an excellent person, who speaks a great deal but accomplishes little, a personality who every day goes to meet with everyone, talks to everyone—to those whom he needs to and to those whom he does not need to. Such a personality will not be an iron President. He is a very soft person, too soft—one compromise after another, very kind. He yields to everyone. What is to be done? Banditry is on the rise. They mug people, kill people. What would you do in America about this? Would you tolerate such business there?"

Bunich's view of crime running rampant was shared by many of my Moscow friends; they had not yet got used to seeing murders, rapes, and robberies reported rather freely in the press. Whether or not crime was actually on the rise, it seemed to be. Bunich's explanation was simple. "The weakness of authority, that's all," he said.

I told him I was puzzled by that, since the Soviet Union still had police, prosecutors, and courts.

"But they're all afraid to touch the criminals," he said. "They're afraid to punish."

Up walked Aleksandr Yakovlev, an influential legal expert and legislator, who had spent time in the United States studying the American political and legal system. I had met him in Washington the previous December, when he was part of a delegation of Soviet legislators observing Congress and state governments and meeting with lobbyists and judges. For Yakovlev, one of the high points of the visit had been a session with a panel of lawyers from the American Civil Liberties Union. "They were so sincere, so selfless, so apolitical," he said at the time. "We need such an organization in our country."

Yakovlev has a scholarly look. He is a tall man with horn-rimmed glasses, and throughout the Congress he wore a maroon sweater under his suit jacket. He has an easy smile, which he uses as he warns Americans that he is not the other, more famous, Aleksandr Yakovlev—the Politburo member and close Gorbachev confidant. Rather, he is a criminal lawyer at a leading think tank, the Institute of State and Law, and he has been instrumental in bringing certain Anglo-American ideas into Soviet thinking. He played a major role in revising criminal procedures during the last year, seeing enacted a law that enables the republics to introduce trial by jury and one that provides defendants with the right to counsel immediately after arrest rather than after the police finish investigating. That, he said, was one explanation for the sense of paralysis that Bunich mentioned. Investigators accustomed to browbeating defendants into confessing now had to do some serious police work, to gather evidence. "It's new to them," Yakovlev said. "They can't just extract a confession. They have to look at footprints, and so on. It's work."

We found a couple of chairs in a small area that had been designated a press center, and sat down to talk. Yakovlev seemed enthusiastic but cautious about the fundamental constitutional changes under way. "There have been instances when the powerful executive was used for quashing democracy and, paradoxically, when it was used for building the basis of democracy," he said. "If you look at history, you will find both. I'm glad to say that powerful executive institutions are now used mostly either as a tool or as a preparatory stage for democracy. There are a lot of examples around, beginning with South America. Of course, no one is inclined to forget the dreadful possibility of turning the powerful executive branch against democracy. But I have some hope that now most social developments in most states are subordinated to what is perhaps known as the wave of the future or the rhyme of the times." He grinned with satisfaction at his turn of phrase in English. "Democracy is on the march everywhere, from Chile to South Korea, the Soviet Union included. And I can't imagine that it is very easy or very possible to avoid this dominant tune in the historic symphony. Anybody who cannot foresee it is courting the Bucharest variation.

"In the history of Russia, you have

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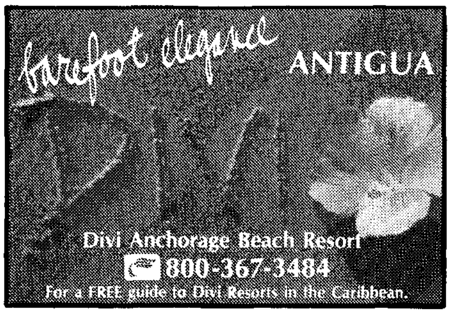
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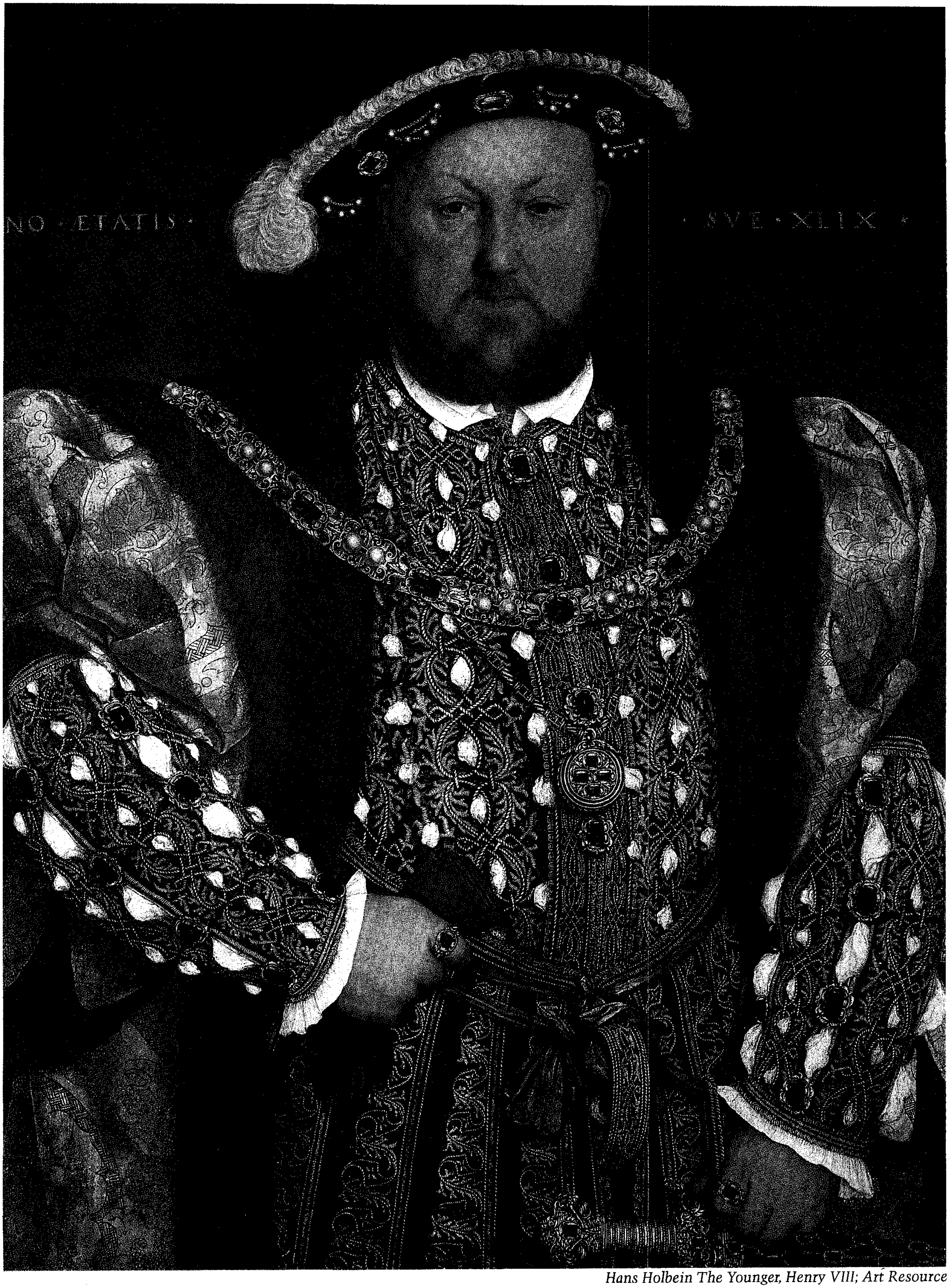
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both Alexander the liberator and Ivan the Terrible. In Russian history, in the Russian psyche, a strong man must be the head of government. Historically, psychologically, it may be explained by the constant invasions, by the peasant-countryside psychology—what is a house without the head of the house? So it has some appeal, this idea of a strong man on top.” Consequently, he warned, the separation of powers being written into the Constitution, which is essential if the Soviet Union is to become a state based on law, provides merely an opportunity, not a guarantee. “It doesn’t sound bad, but how will it be in practice?” Yakovlev asked. For one thing, he said, the Supreme Court should be given the power of judicial review—the authority to rule on the constitutionality of laws and decrees. It is now able to reverse trial decisions of lower courts but not to throw out laws. As a result, he said, the Soviet Constitution “was no constitution at all, only fiction.” Currently, a Constitutional Supervisory Commission, whose members are elected by the Congress for ten-year terms, has the right to advise—but only to advise—on whether a bill coincides with the Constitution. “We are on the eve of reconsidering the status of the Supreme Court,” he said. “How we will succeed I don’t know.” The Congress took a small step toward an independent judiciary by adopting a constitutional amendment that made the Chairman of the Supreme Court immune to dismissal by the President.

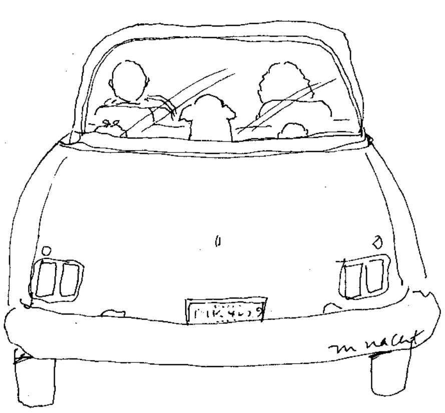
Another question is how assertive the Supreme Soviet will be as an independent legislature. “I think that Gorbachev will employ just as much heavy-handedness as we agree to tolerate,” Yakovlev said. “If we tolerate it, we deserve it. It must be watched very carefully, because we have a very bad tradition. In prerevolutionary Russia, the decree of the czar was the real law. The whole empire lived from decree to decree. And I think that the Supreme Soviet must be very careful to take the necessary measures to prevent—even to give some warnings to the President not to usurp its power, because the temptation will be great. And the bad Russian tradition of vesting legislative powers in the executive, dating from the old times, bothers me.”

In that case, I asked him, why not accept the Interregional Group’s argument that Presidential powers should be more severely limited, and established only in a completely new constitution?

“The best is the enemy of the better,” he replied. “They are trying to do the best, but the best runs the risk of losing the better. It’s a very good point they have made. It shows us the dangers, stimulates our rethinking. But we are trying to sail a ship and simultaneously rebuild it. We don’t have a spare ship to step into for a moment and sail.”

GORBACHEV was back on the dais, keeping a list of upcoming speakers as they walked toward the front of the hall and passed a note or waved to signal their desire to say a few words. Their arguments were curious. Each one seemed to see what he wished to see in the leader. There were the Westernizers, the economic reformers, the military men, the nationalists from various republics, and the tough-minded law-and-order advocates, each with his own agenda, which he somehow imagined Gorbachev pursuing as President. Those expectations appeared to set the stage for considerable disappointment in the near future.

Ivan Dorokhov, the Party Secretary from Voronezh and a representative of the law-and-order school, painted such an apocalyptic picture of his society that it was hard to think how any national leader could solve its problems. “The embezzlement, the bribery, the black market, the all-permissiveness, the amorality, all these deficiencies have resulted in a situation where our people are afraid to go on living,” he said. Reacting to the liberals’ misgivings about a powerful Presidency, he asked, “Who is afraid of stronger power? We think that honest people should not be afraid of stronger power. In the United States of America, most of the American people took a liking to President Reagan and then Bush, for the strong action that was taken in the interests of the nation. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher for years enjoyed the popular support of the people by casting herself in the mold of the Iron Lady. Who can do without power in our country? Perhaps those who dream of seizing power in the future by violent means, or somebody who would be happy with the anarchy of all-permissiveness . . . Unless these negative processes are checked, unless we insure safety and well-being, the People’s Deputies will be called upon to introduce a state of emergency rather than just a Presidency.”



This speech was followed by an appeal from Nikolai Shmelyov, an economist, for the drastic use of strong Presidential powers to undertake a radical reform of the economy, to let the market determine prices, the distribution of jobs, and the like. “It is very important for a huge, multi-ethnic country like ours to have a supreme arbiter,” he said. “What we need is the authority of political power that will take unpopular decisions. I am afraid it will be impossible to get past long-established dogma without massive Presidential power, without the full weight of the Presidency coming down on all this prejudice.”

While the debate continued, Gorbachev’s people scoured the Congress for votes. At one point, one of his aides, Georgy Shakhnazarov, was seated behind the Presidium, huddled in conversation with Arnold Ruutel, the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Estonia, trying to make a deal. Shakhnazarov stood, walked to Gorbachev, and whispered something. Gorbachev then left his chair and sat with Ruutel for a few minutes of intense discussion. Estonia, which had been annexed in 1940 along with Lithuania and Latvia, was also attempting to regain its independence. Estonian deputies told reporters later that Gorbachev was agreeing with Ruutel to negotiate on independence in return for the Estonian delegation’s support for the Presidency. Estonia had only forty-eight deputies, not all of whom were there, but every one counted, and only five of them could be depended on to vote with Gorbachev. Lithuania’s delegates, numbering fifty-eight, had announced that since their republic had already reaffirmed its independence they were attending the Congress only as observers, not as participants.

Gorbachev was in a hurry, and as

evening approached he tried to cut off debate, so that a vote could be taken quickly. The deputies were tired and somewhat restless, but they were not finished talking. Many argued that the matter was too weighty to be dismissed with only a day's discussion. Furthermore, not every republic had had a chance to express its views, and in a period of heightened sensitivity to diverse ethnic interests, refusing even one that chance would be an unacceptable slight. Gorbachev then tried to present the Congress with a hard choice: either close the debate now or continue into the night until it was finished. Again the deputies grumbled, for many of them from the provinces did not get to the big city that often, and seemed determined to take in some theatre or ballet. Gorbachev put the question to a series of votes, which he was unable to win. He finally suggested that the discussion be ended except for speeches by representatives of republics. The Congress voted him down, 1,469 to 463, and adjourned to continue the debate the following day.

Tuesday morning, moments after calling the session to order, Gorbachev was asked from the floor for information on Lithuania. "You will have noticed that the Lithuanians—and representatives of Estonia and Latvia are joining them in this—are proposing that we conduct talks with them," he said. "I think that there can be no question of any talks. Talks are something we conduct with foreign states." This set off turbulence in the hall, with deputies on both sides of the issue rising to their feet and crowding the aisles, where microphones had been set up. But Gorbachev, who controlled the microphones from a panel in front of him, refused to turn them on. "I think, comrades, that we should not begin a debate," he said. There were shouts from the floor. "Please sit down, comrades. Comrades, sit down. We will move on, comrades, to the debate, the continuation of the debate, according to the agenda . . ."

When the Congress took a break later in the morning, Estonian deputies in the foyer said that Gorbachev's refusal to negotiate had rendered their agreement null and void. The fate of the proposed Presidency therefore appeared to rest on what compromises Gorbachev and his associates were willing to make on Presidential powers. As it turned out, the concessions were considerable.

Stankevich and other liberals had submitted written proposals to a drafting commission whose chairman was Vladimir Kudryavtsev, a legal scholar and former head of the Institute of State and Law. He was a tall man with a long, thin face and a distinguished air that seemed to place him above partisanship. He told me at one point that he and his commission had used the United States and France as models for constructing the Soviet Presidency. When he took the rostrum, he announced to the legislators that three hundred and ten constitutional amendments had been suggested. All but a handful had been screened out by the commission and were never put to a vote.

Several key limitations on Presidential authority were cleared by the commission, and Kudryavtsev read the revised passages to the deputies. One dealt with legislative power to override a Presidential veto. In the first draft, a veto could be reversed by a two-thirds vote of the Supreme Soviet—the American system—but the President could then send the measure to the Congress of Deputies, which would have to vote its approval for the law to take effect. Since the Congress is scheduled to meet for only a few days twice a year, liberals felt that this "double override," as they called it, would undermine legislative flexibility in checking the President. The commission agreed to go back to the American model, allowing a veto to be defeated by a two-thirds vote in both chambers of the Supreme Soviet, with no role for the full Congress.

Liberals also made inroads into the President's ability to declare a state of emergency. The original draft gave him that power practically without restriction, allowed him to extend "Presidential rule" into any locality or republic, and empowered him to impose martial law. The revisions, read and explained by Kudryavtsev, were made in two stages, the first responding to Westernizers, who wanted to strengthen the legislature, and the second, on the following day, to generals, who warned that subjecting war powers to legislative debate would encumber the President as commander-in-chief. The

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result was a complex balance. To declare a state of emergency, the President would have to receive a request or an agreement from the local government, or he would have to submit the declaration for immediate confirmation by a two-thirds vote of the Supreme Soviet. After declaring a state of emergency, he can extend "temporary Presidential rule," but only in accordance with the law and without violating "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the union republic."

After this limitation was enacted Tuesday, an amendment was passed Wednesday, at the suggestion of the military, that separated martial law and the state of emergency into two articles. Martial law could be imposed "in case of military attack on the U.S.S.R.," and would have to be referred immediately to the Supreme Soviet for its "consideration." The provision left vague the question of whether the Supreme Soviet would have the explicit right to disapprove.

Stankevich had urged that the Supreme Soviet be granted subpoena powers so that it could summon reluctant officials from the executive branch, but Gorbachev apparently balked at this, for Kudryavtsev told the Congress, "I agree, but this is not part of this law and should be done separately in a law adopted by the Supreme Soviet."

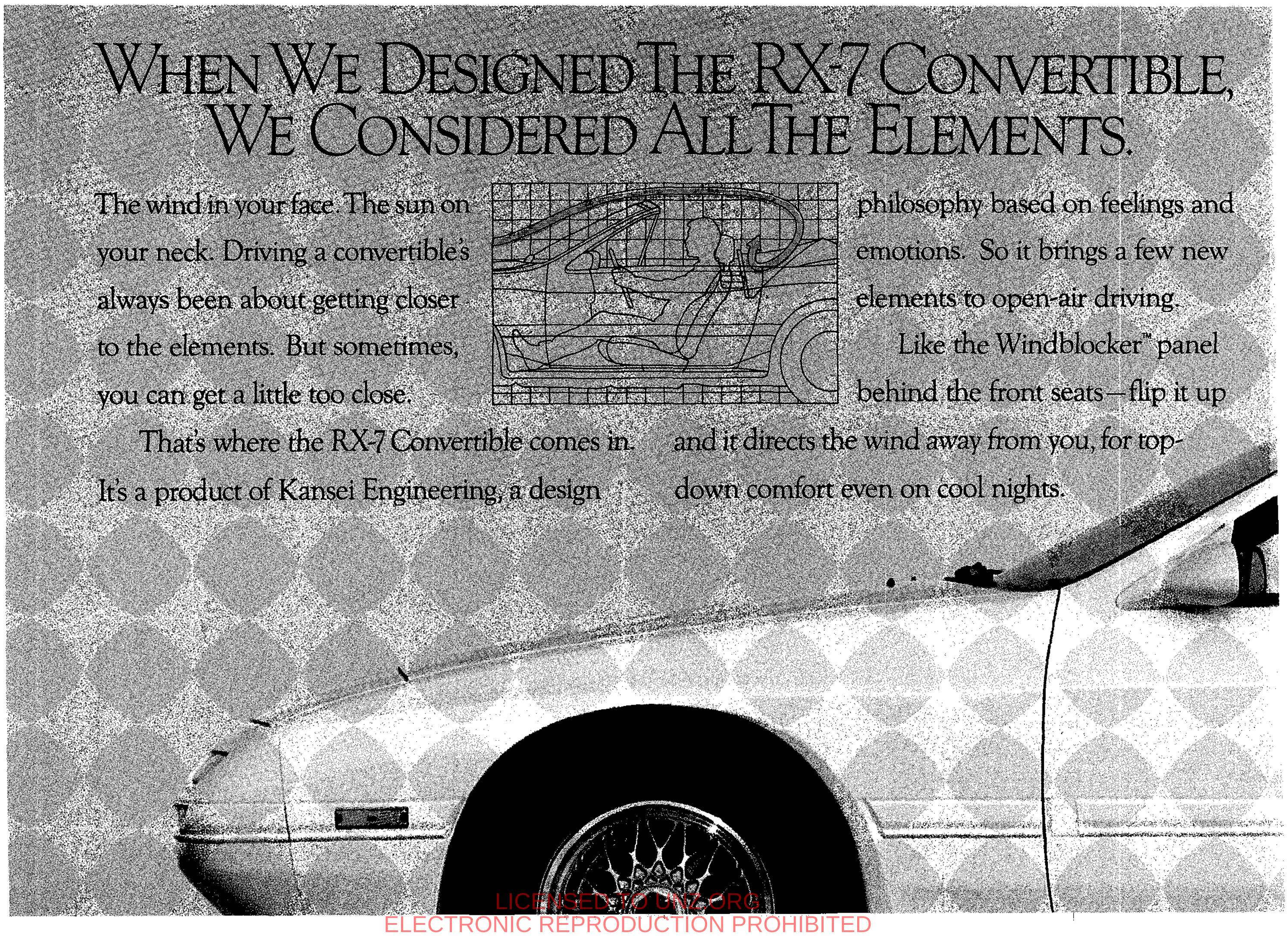
"It's almost enough," Stankevich said at the buffet, during the lunch break. "I'm not completely satisfied with this bill, but I can accept it. The only problem now is Gorbachev's inclination to be elected straight from parliament. We can find a compromise even on that point, I think, if he can propose, for example, the idea of a transitional President, let's say for two or three years, with a very specific mandate that during these two or three years the President should prepare a new constitution."

I asked what had happened when that idea was raised with Gorbachev's aides.

"His people have avoided this discussion, absolutely, from the very beginning," Stankevich said. But he said he thought that the Congress would still have an open shot at amending the package of powers from the floor. Gorbachev was about to dash that expectation.

At the door of the buffet, Anatoly Sobchak was cheerfully denying that he would be a candidate for President. Sobchak, fifty-three years old, has become one of the country's most popular rising political figures. A moderately liberal member of the Interregional Group, who is now mayor of Leningrad, he has a gregarious charm and a sober, common-sense outlook. Although he can be sharp-tongued, he usually maintains an aura of responsibility, blending it carefully with a devotion to reform. Practically everywhere I went in Moscow, people were impressed to learn that I had talked with him, as if he were a movie star. "I *love* him!" cried a female schoolteacher whom I met the week of the Congress. Every day of the session, Sobchak wore a dark-blue tie inscribed all over with tiny red letters—"NYSE," standing for the New York Stock Exchange, which he had visited during a trip in 1989, the first year he was allowed to travel abroad.

Sobchak, who served on the drafting commission, thought that the changes on the state of emergency were satisfactory. "The Supreme Soviet may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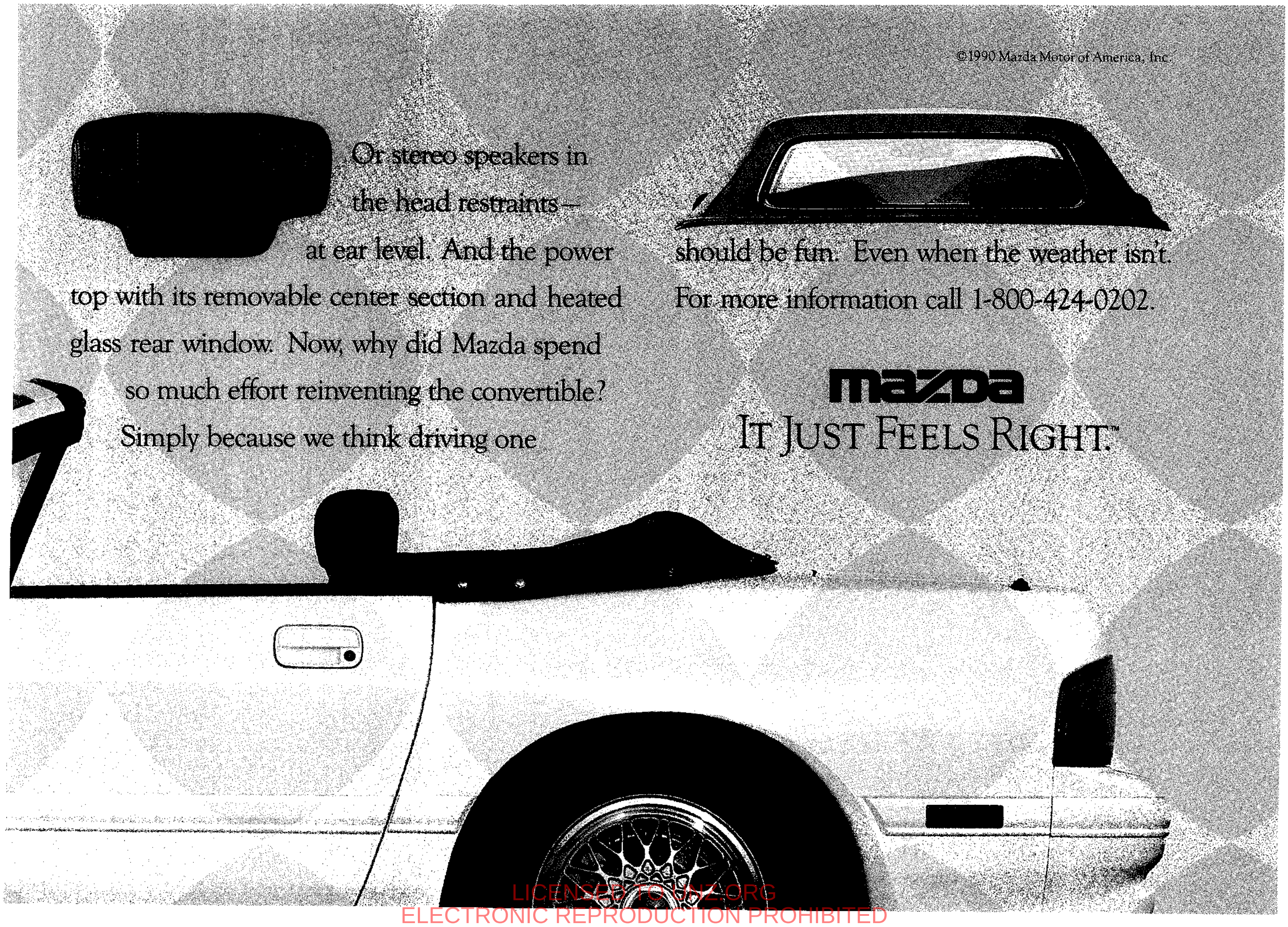
cancel it," he observed. "I am absolutely certain that on a problem such as that in Lithuania nobody is going to declare a state of emergency." Like many other liberals, he had little sympathy for the Lithuanians' resolution on independence. "This is a symbolic decision in that it was not thought out ahead of time," he said. "And the declaration of the creation of a Lithuanian national state does harm to our general business of democratization. We must have a union in which the various republics can be different. All the republics must sign an agreement on how they will participate in the union."

IN the lobbies, stout army officers, in green uniforms with red trim, stood in tight circles, rarely mingling with other members of the Congress. Some of the younger officers were reform-minded, but many of their seniors grumbled openly. One general after another mounted the rostrum to denounce the press for printing criticism of the Army, to question Gorbachev's permitting such disrespect for the defenders of the motherland, to plead for a restoration of firm morality and patriotism. These men, accustomed to automatic deference, seemed genuinely hurt and bewildered by the sudden condemnations of the military for the war in Afghanistan, for the 1989 attack by soldiers with poison gas and sharpened shovels on peaceful demonstrators in Soviet Georgia, for the cruel hazing of new draftees in many units. (Later, during the Presidential nominations, one officer expressed his distrust of Gorbachev by suggesting that before anyone became President he be required to take military courses in a military academy.) Marshal Ivan Kozhedub, an aged veteran in uniform, his deep voice echoing through the hall like the rumble of doom, declared, "It is becoming more evident that mass disorder will be victorious. . . . We were victorious in the Great Fatherland War, we unlocked the secrets of the atom, journeyed into space. But now there stands a question: What kind of example are we setting for our youth? Our young people's heroes are without conscience, as in the West. And our organs of mass information are full of amorality, raising the young in a spirit of egotism, without morals." He paused and reached for a pitcher. The sound of water splashing into a glass was picked up by the microphone on the lectern and amplified in the hall. "I'm a little upset," he said, and then continued. "The mass media, with the tacit consent of certain leaders of the country, never cease their attempts to slander and throw dirt on the past, on the present, on the future Army and Navy. . . . The military of our country is completely fulfilling its constitutional duty, steadfastly and fully defending the motherland. We are upset that there is spreading in the society an attitude of carelessness toward the security of our state. We are indulging in carelessness about our military industry. We hasten to withdraw Soviet power from Europe." He went on to reminisce about the war, and then hobbled stiffly off the platform, to a surge of warm applause.

Late in the afternoon of the second day, Gorbachev grew increasingly impatient with the endless debate. He moved it along briskly, the way a talk-show host would have done, and tolerated no deviation from the agen-



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da when Kudryavtsev was answering questions. "Excuse me," Gorbachev said, "only questions. No amendments. Do you have a question or not? Thank you, we got your point." And, flip, off went the microphone, on to the next speaker.

Then Gorbachev pulled his trick. The liberals, who had not been able to get all their desired limitations on Presidential power through the drafting commission, wanted to propose some of them from the floor. The Western tradition, of course, is that amendments to a proposed bill are introduced, discussed, and voted upon, and when they are exhausted the bill itself is put to the vote. Gorbachev, who is no devotee of Robert's Rules of Order, evaded this sequence, and deferred proposed changes to the draft on the Presidency until after the entire section was adopted and inserted in the Constitution. As a result, since the draft was now part of the Constitution, each subsequent change required a constitutional amendment, which meant that it needed a two-thirds vote, not the simple majority that would have been sufficient to alter the draft under well-established parliamentary procedure. Most of the liberals did not really understand what was happening until it was too late. When they protested, Gorbachev lectured them. "This is normal procedure in parliaments all over the world," he said.

Earlier in the Congress, Gorbachev, like a patronizing schoolmaster, had reminded the deputies a couple of times how to work their voting machines. Every six deputies had an electronic box, attached to a long cord, that would be passed along a row during the minute and forty-five seconds allotted to voting. Each deputy would insert a coded card, wait for a yellow light indicating that he had been registered, and then push the "Yes," "No," or "Abstain" button. A pair of huge screens, one on each side of the stage, would tell the deputies how long they had to perform this function: on each screen, a digital clock would tick down, showing the time remaining in the voting period. The screen would then go black for twenty or thirty seconds before the totals flashed on against a green background.

The Congress had decided to separate the constitutional changes concerning the Presidency into several sections: on the creation of the office, on Presidential powers, and on the manner of the first election. Somehow, the liberals thought they were now voting "in principle" and would get another chance at the entire provision in a final vote, later. So when Gorbachev called for a vote on creating the Presidency, most liberals went along. As they passed the electronic boxes among them, they did not realize that they were actually voting to amend the Constitution. The provision passed—1,817 to 133, with 61 abstentions. "I congratulate the Congress," Gorbachev declared, and the deputies applauded. Then he put the second question, on the powers of the President, which many liberals wanted to restrict further. That also passed—1,771 to 164, with 74 abstentions. The horror of their mistake began to dawn on them only when they started to propose new amendments and were told that passage would require two-thirds of the Congress.

As it turned out, many of their proposals over the next two days won a healthy majority but fell just short of the 1,497 needed to reach two-thirds. For example, an effort to prohibit the President from serving also as a Party official—which would ultimately have meant Gorbachev's having to resign as General Secretary—got 1,303 votes, with only 607 against, but not enough to pass. A proposal to eliminate the President's power to revoke citizenship—which had been used, as the sponsor recalled, against Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and other dissidents—received 1,238 votes in favor and just 660 against, and lost. But Gorbachev, too,

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The trees sway darkly
along the black wall with its vines.
For shelter, a cat squeezes
between the steel bars over a window.
This is where the caretaker lives,
catty-corner to the cemetery,
with a door the color of stone.

We've just descended the mountains,
windshield wipers slapping mud
while we talked about the acrobat
who was in the papers in Barcelona
yesterday: how he attempted
to perch blindfolded on the highest
steeple of the Gaudí cathedral.

Through the gate, in the first
row of gravestones, a statue
depicts a young woman
raising her hand to her face:
the mortuary sign for a suicide.
Is she about to touch her forehead?
to tear out her hair?
to dig her nails into her cheek?
to stifle a cry
or make the sign of the cross?

In this life which is the only life
it is a gesture we see every day.
You say someone in a position
to know told you it's easy
to learn about these things
without learning anything at all.
Without ever running out of questions.
When that acrobat fell in bright sunlight,
did all the women in the street raise
their hands to shield their eyes?

—NICHOLAS CHRISTOPHER

• •

was foiled by his procedure when someone suggested eliminating the requirement that Presidential candidates be between thirty-five and sixty-five years old. Gorbachev said that he agreed. "I stuck to one view. We should not have any limits, a top or bottom limit," he told the Congress. "But in this I yielded to the majority." The vote was short of the two-thirds: 1,283 to eliminate the age restrictions and 638 to keep them. So they were kept.

In the lobby, Stankevich was bathed in television lights and surrounded by a crowd of reporters as he accused Gorbachev of violating parliamentary rules. An old general, his chest covered with battle ribbons, approached the edge of the group, looked at Stankevich, and asked me, in a menacing tone, "Who's that? Sobchak?"

"No, Stankevich," I told him.

"Stankevich? Who's he?"

"A member of the Interregional Group," I said.

"Oh, he's against us," the general declared. "He's young."

"Against whom?" I asked.

"Against the Soviet Union," the old fighter growled.

"Because he's young?" I asked.

"No, because of what he says." The general, who had not listened to what Stankevich had to say, began to stalk off angrily, and snarled over his shoulder, "He forgets where he was born."

On the afternoon of the third day, Wednesday, the Congress considered how to elect the first President. Stankevich approached the platform to try to introduce his idea of a two- or three-year Presidential term, but Gorbachev always seemed to look through him, like an infuriating waiter. "He saw me, but he didn't allow me to speak," Stankevich said later. "I signalled to the Presidium that I was ready to put an amendment, but nobody noticed my signs. I am really disappointed that I couldn't even put this idea on the ballot. It is not a democratic procedure."

Again the debate was punctuated by anxiety about anarchy, by a yearning for a strong leader, by a deep distrust of the unpredictable forces that could be set loose in a general election now. This time, it was argued, Congress had to move quickly to fill the power vacuum. The most ominous warning about the dangers of an open political contest came from a venerated eighty-three-year-old Russian historian, Dmitri Likhachev, who stood at the lectern and declared, "I am not a lawyer, but I think I am the oldest deputy present. I remember the February revolution very well, and I know where emotions can lead. Our country is swept with emotion, and under these circumstances a direct election of the President will lead right to civil war. Please believe me and trust my experience." When he finished, there was a moment of silence, then a burst of applause as he made his way carefully off the platform.

The vote to have the Congress elect the first President was close: 1,542 in favor, only 45 more than the required two-thirds.

Likhachev's invocation of the February revolution of 1917 had deep resonance for his audience. That upheaval had overthrown the Czar, replacing him with the Provisional Government, a tenuous multiparty coalition that proved unable to arrest the spiral of economic problems that had precipitated the uprising. The Army's morale and discipline were shattered, and the new regime's attempt to prosecute the war against Germany led to serious defeats on the battlefield. Mobs swept through Petrograd in violent demonstrations, and eight months after the first revolution of the year came the second, as the Bolsheviks seized power. The Provisional Government is no model for Soviet citizens today; to many of them its short and turbulent life merely underscores the fragility of democracy and the difficulty of rendering political change in a gradual, nonviolent fashion. The experience of Russia is not one of peaceful evolution, which is what Gorbachev is attempting, but of upheaval amid disorder.

ON Wednesday, a deputy complained about the procedures, asserting that the Congress's rules required two readings to adopt a measure. "The rules of procedure stipulate that a vote must be taken on each amendment separately," he explained. "And if the draft is amended the whole draft must be voted on again." Therefore, he moved that the original vote on the powers of the Presidency be declared null and void. There were cheers and applause from the hall.

Then Roy Medvedev, the veteran dissident and historian, who was now a member of the Supreme Soviet, rose to disagree. He called the proposal "ob-

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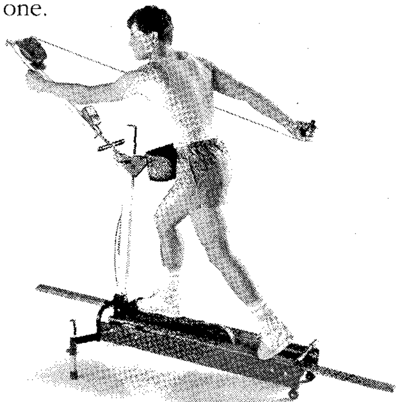

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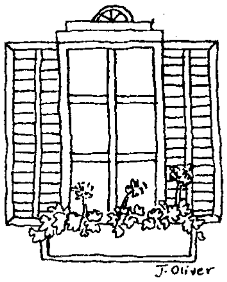
struction and filibustering," and maintained that the Congress, as "the master of its own procedure," could make any rules it wished. "I suggest that this proposal be turned down, and I invite everyone to concentrate on the agenda," he said. There were cries of anger, but the Congress took his advice, and decided, by a total of 1,398 to 409, with 163 abstentions, against annulling its previous vote.

In the foyer, reporters asked Medvedev why he had not accepted the argument that Gorbachev had stifled the democratic process. He looked a bit surprised. "This is customary practice in Komsomol and Party meetings," he said. "First you adopt a resolution and then you consider amendments." So tradition had taken its toll, even of a man who had spent his life defying officially approved wisdom.



Medvedev still lives on the edge of Moscow, in a fifth-floor walkup, where I used to visit him in the nineteen-seventies. At that time, long before scholarly truth-telling became fashionable in his country, he was engaged in meticulous research on subjects that were considered taboo. He had been expelled from the Communist Party; his detailed study of Stalinism, "Let History Judge," had been published only in the West, not at home, and so had "On Socialist Democracy," his book-length prescription for what are now called *glasnost* and *perestroika*. The son of a loyal political officer in the Army who died in Stalin's purges, Medvedev was driven by a need to understand the system that had murdered his father. Yet he always believed in the system's ability to reform, and he remained a socialist. He calibrated his dissent with the care of a traveller picking his way through a swamp (his own metaphor): first put a foot out to find solid ground, then step, pause, test the next piece of ground. For fifteen months in 1984 and 1985, he was cut off from the larger world by a policeman who was stationed at his door to bar foreign visitors.

Late one night after the Congress had adjourned, I climbed the grimy tile stairway. I had made the journey many times in past years, and it brought back a host of familiar sensations—all except one. Gone was the feeling of tension. I was not skulking out to see a dissident; I was paying a call on a member of the Supreme Soviet, and not even a radical but one whose constancy of view amid the country's shifting politics had made him a centrist now, like Gorbachev. On the top floor, outside Medvedev's door, there was still a large wooden box, in which visitors used to leave him bootleg books when he was not at home. As he escorted me through the entranceway of his flat, I sidestepped a bucket that was catching water from a leaky roof. We walked along a corridor to a small back room that had always been his study, lined with books, dominated by a large desk. Medvedev had aged somewhat. He was gray-haired, as he had been, but had grown slightly stooped with fatigue. He wore four or five pens in the outside pocket of his suit jacket, and he fumbled absently for his glasses. But when he got excited about an idea all befuddlement was suddenly swept away like a cobweb, and he spoke lucidly.

Radical reformers don't like him. He is not a joiner, and he has not become a member of the Interregional Group. He defends Gorbachev more often than he criticizes him. And, most important, he has exposed the wrongdoing of two former prosecutors, Telman Gdlyan and Nikolai Ivanov, who gained a popular following by investigating organized crime and corruption in Uzbekistan, arresting Leonid Brezhnev's son-in-law, Yuri Churbanov, and spreading accusations that Yegor Ligachev, the Politburo's leading hard-liner, was involved. The prosecutors' reputations with the public rose further when they were expelled from the Communist Party and dismissed from their jobs.

Last year, Medvedev was named chairman of a commission to examine the allegations of corruption, and the position put him closer to the center of power than he had ever been. That obviously pleased him, and as we talked he could not help breaking into a boyish grin at the odd reversals in this new world. "Wednesday, we're going to hear a deputy prosecutor," he said. "They come to us, testify before us. We heard a representative of the Supreme Court, prosecutors, the investigative department of the K.G.B.—and in all cases they appear before the committee and answer questions." There was a lilt of wonder in his voice. "Compared with the situation ten years ago, when there was a lot of pressure on me, I find myself in a rather paradoxical situation," he continued. "For example, seven years ago I was summoned by the deputy general prosecutor, Oleg Soroka, who demanded that I cease my 'anti-Soviet activities, slanderous activities.' They gave me an official warning: if I continued these activities, very great unpleasantness would be waiting for me. Next to him were sitting two officials of the K.G.B. He was surprised that I wasn't frightened. Just the opposite: I accused *him*, saying that this was not his business, and that he had a great many other tasks to which he should be giving his attention, and why was he wasting his time on my historical and philosophical work?

"And not long ago, sitting in an office in the Kremlin, I summoned Soroka for interrogation, because as deputy general prosecutor he supervised the work of Gdlyan in Uzbekistan." Medvedev smiled beatifically, as if he had caught a glimpse of divine justice. "As chairman of the commission, I requested the staff of the Supreme Soviet to invite Soroka for a discussion that was in fact an interrogation. We had a polite discussion. I didn't remind him of the past, but I posed questions, and he was obligated to answer me. He answered all my questions very calmly. I didn't want to settle accounts, and I conducted myself in such a manner. I'm not getting ready to settle scores with anyone. My only requirement was that they return all books, materials, manuscripts that they seized during searches. They returned them." The order under which Medvedev had been expelled from the Party was also annulled, restoring him to membership.

Gdlyan has attacked Medvedev. "Not long ago," Medvedev recalled, "Gdlyan spoke at a meeting and said that Roy Medvedev lives in a large, extravagant apartment, that he has two cars, a Mercedes and a Swedish Volvo, and he has a big country house, and so forth." He laughed and gestured around him. "You see that it's not at all so."

Medvedev's investigation found that Gdlyan and Ivanov had little evidence to corroborate many of their criminal charges. Furthermore, he asserted, they were guilty of a range of abuses. "Corruption actually existed and was childreach sponsorship

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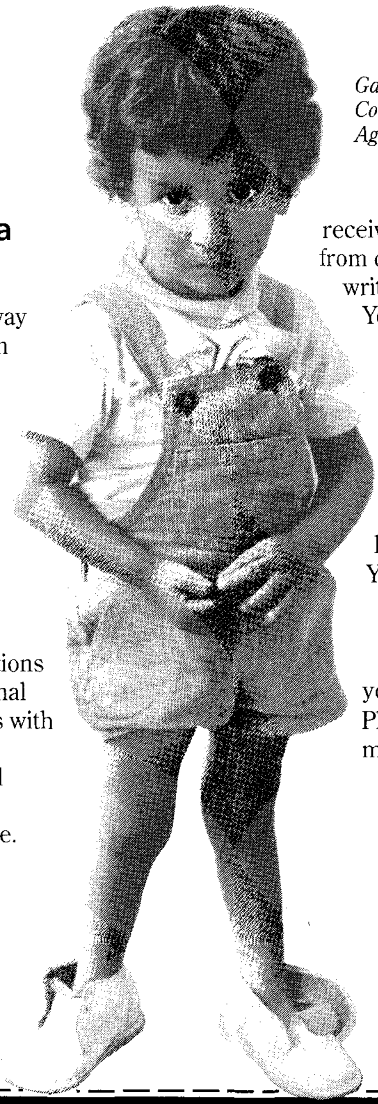

Gabriel Cortez
Colombia
Age 4

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spread throughout governmental departments, prosecutors' offices, the police, and so forth," Medvedev said. "Corruption touched the Moscow élite. I could name dozens of families that took bribes, expensive gifts, including Brezhnev's family. But we don't have the habits of the English; we're still not used to conducting court cases against former members of the Politburo, and so forth. Nobody conducted an investigation. There is no evidence. An investigation is needed of Romanov, of Aliyev"—two former Politburo members, Grigory Romanov and Geydar Aliyev, who were ousted by Gorbachev. With the less powerful, Gdlyan and Ivanov "trampled on the permissible methods of investigation," Medvedev said. "They placed people in demeaning situations, beat people in cells. They often arrested relatives to put pressure on suspects. They used many methods that were described in 'The Gulag Archipelago'—understand? They explain the business of tracking down corruption thus: juridically and criminally, it's difficult to prove, especially the paying of bribes ten years ago; therefore, the main method is the confession, to get the accused to confess that he paid—to whom, how much, and so forth. So he must always give evidence against himself. That completely violates the American juridical idea. That is the old, Stalinist method."

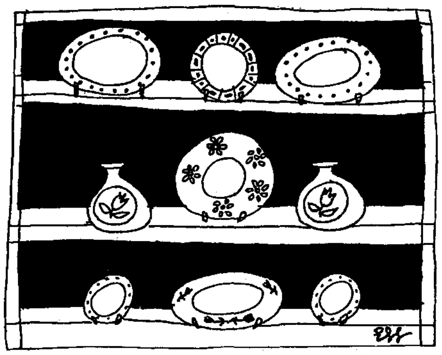
A few weeks after our talk, while thousands demonstrated outside the Kremlin on behalf of Gdlyan and Ivanov, Medvedev's commission recommended that the Supreme Soviet strip the two men of their parliamentary immunity to prosecution. The members refused, but passed a resolution warning that such a step might be taken if Gdlyan and Ivanov continued making "groundless" statements.

IT was time to nominate candidates for President. This could have been a pleasant experience for Gorbachev if he had been able to listen to nothing but platitudes of praise from deputies who put up his name. But many of the deputies used their speeches as vehicles of criticism. Military officers again expressed resentment that the Army was being slandered in the press. A deputy complained that food rationing limited people in Perm, his home city, to seven grams of butter and twenty grams of sausage per day. "Therefore, I protest the glorification and praise lavished on our leaders, and I invite the first President elected in our country to come to our region as soon as possible," he said. A third deputy criticized Gorbachev obliquely for meeting with intellectuals and owners of coöperatives but not with soldiers. Leonid Sukhov, a taxi-driver from Kharkov, complained about corruption, incipient capitalism, and food shortages. Somebody else chided Gorbachev for never having gone through an election campaign, as many of the deputies had.

One of the more honest speakers began, "Distinguished comrades, distinguished television viewers . . ." The new Soviet politicians were behaving like politicians, playing to the cameras, articulating the grievances of the voters back home. Gorbachev sat there looking as if he had a stomach ache.

Although Gorbachev's victory was a foregone conclusion, a few deputies wanted at least nominal competition. A conservative group, called Soyuz (Union), nominated Nikolai Ryzhkov and Interior Minister Vadim Bakatin. Both withdrew, however, leaving Gorbachev alone. The rose-colored ballots, produced quickly in some Kremlin duplicating room, were printed with Gorbachev's name and the words "Yes" and "No." The deputies were instructed to cross out the option they did not want; that is, if they wished to vote for Gorbachev they crossed out "No."

It was dark outside by the time the legislators left the auditorium and walked to the Great Kremlin Palace to cast their ballots in St. George Hall, a long, ornate room with spiral columns. There had been a dusting of snow during the day, making the Kremlin grounds pristine. Some deputies chose to go along an interior corridor, past large windows looking out on the white towers and golden onion domes of the fifteenth-century Cathedral of the Assumption. Others strolled outdoors on the snowy walkways, surrounded by the lighted red brick walls, the gilded domes, the ruby-red stars and red flags topping the Kremlin towers. When all had voted, some ambled back into the night, their hushed conversations like church whispers. The moment was stirring and disturbing, a dissonance of ancient power and modern fragility, a tentative, uncertain lurch toward the unknown. A flaw—a streak of sadness—ran through these walls and turrets. Against the white ground squatted the black metal of the Czar Cannon, the largest-calibre gun in the world, forged four hundred years ago. Next to the cannon stood an old general in his greatcoat, waiting for his limousine.



AT ten o'clock the next morning, Yuri Osipyan, a physicist and the chairman of the vote-counting commission, announced the results to the Congress. Of precisely 2,000 ballots distributed, 1,878 had been dropped into the ballot boxes, he said. (The rest were retained by deputies who favored a general election: they were taking their ballots home to show their constituents that they had refused to vote, as a protest.) Of those, 54 were invalid, 1,329 had been cast for Gorbachev (just 59.2 per cent of the total membership of the Congress), and 495 against.

Gorbachev then recited the oath, with a significant change that had been made by the Congress. Instead of pledging to "serve the Soviet people," as the original was written, Gorbachev pledged to "serve the peoples of our country," the plural having been inserted to meet the growing sensibilities of the population's diverse ethnic groups. Rising regionalism was a strong theme at the Congress, reflecting the fragmentation of the Soviet citizenry along racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and geographical lines. Demands for economic autonomy and direct political representation in Moscow were heard not only from the constituent republics but also from governmental divisions which are roughly equivalent to big counties within the republics, such as "autonomous republics," okrugs, and oblasts. Some of these divisions are defined, by name and area, according to the ethnic backgrounds of most of their residents, giving those citizens a clear identity to grasp in an age when larger ideologies and allegiances are disintegrating. This centrifugal force, many deputies believe, will promote political pluralism and so prevent Moscow from returning to authoritarianism. But some guarantees of a democratic system may also be hard to establish. Kudryavtsev told me, for example, that some outlying regions opposed the concept of judicial review, because they did not want a Supreme Court in Moscow to overturn their local laws as unconstitutional.

At the Congress, a little-noticed step toward shifting power to republics was taken in formulating the constitutional article on general Presidential elections. It stipulates that to win, a candidate must receive not only a majority of the votes cast nationwide but also a majority in most of the fifteen republics. Conceivably, someone could get a nationwide majority by scoring landslide victories in the Russian Republic, Byelorussia, and the Ukraine, which have a combined population of two hundred and nine million, and lose in eight smaller republics, such as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Moldavia, and Turkmenistan, whose populations total only thirty-two million. In that case, nobody would be elected. And the drafting commission, hurrying to complete its work, failed to provide a way out of such a deadlock.

Judith Shahn

Gorbachev, whose long-term strategies are always difficult to discern, appears to be gambling that if he just gives the republics more control over their political and economic lives their hostility to the dominant Russians will dissipate and they will all want to remain in the union. As he made clear at the Congress, he intends to accomplish this by negotiating a "union treaty" with the republics, to recast their relationships with Moscow into some kind of federation. He was angry at the Lithuanians partly because they moved faster than he did, declaring their independence before he had sweetened the pot. It has become evident, however, that the Lithuanians cannot be bought off; nor can the Estonians or Latvians. Their striving for self-determination is the product not of economic calculations but of deep and powerful nationalisms. So Gorbachev's approach may work for some republics but not for all.

This is such an emotional issue, touching the very existence of the Soviet Union, that at the end of the fourth, and final, day it thrust the Congress into a concluding spasm of old, Brezhnev-era propaganda and rhetoric. After Gorbachev swore himself in and gave a speech, after a score of candidates were nominated for Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, and after Gorbachev's confidant Lukyanov was elected, with sixty-four per cent of the votes, the deputies were asked to pass a toughly worded resolution condemning Lithuania. Suddenly, sitting in the balcony where in the nineteen-seventies I had watched a Party congress and other political pageants, I felt transported back to that time of charades and slogans. The resolution was read quickly, as if the Congress were expected just to pass it, because that was what the leadership wished. When a few deputies on the floor demanded a written text, a recess was called, and afterward a text was produced and distributed. Then, in what turned out to be a carefully orchestrated debate, most opponents of the resolution were allowed to speak first, so that the supporters could be arranged in a crescendo of argument, to reach a feverish pitch directly before the vote.

An ethnic Russian from Lithuania, Nikolai Medvedev, gave an eloquent account of Lithuanian suffering, asserting that the Nazis had annihilated two hundred thousand Lithuanians but the Soviets had killed twice that number. His words galvanized the audience, and there were hoots from the floor. As he finished and turned to leave the dais, a man could be heard shouting, "*Vrag naroda! Vrag naroda!*"—"Enemy of the people!"—the standard phrase of indictment by which Stalin sent millions into the Siberian labor camps. It was a lone voice, echoing in the hall like a fragment of an old nightmare.

Supporters of the resolution portrayed the Lithuanian decision on independence as having been taken by a clique against the interests of the population. Officials read telegrams purportedly sent by ordinary people which urged strict action "to defend the rights of Soviet citizens in Lithuania." The commander of the Baltic Fleet, Admi-

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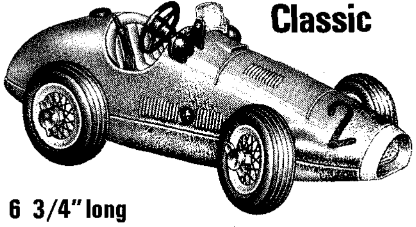

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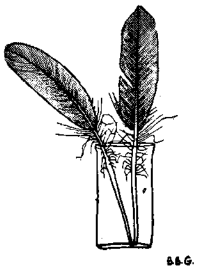
ral Vitaly Ivanov, declared, "Let us not feel sorry for people who do not feel sorry for us." Finally, Gorbachev—though he was no longer a member of the Congress, by virtue of having become President—proposed toning down the resolution. He edited it from the dais, off the top of his head, suggesting passages to delete and reading revisions to the deputies, who dutifully voted for it, 1,463 to 94, with 128 abstentions, without seeing any of the changes in writing.

"How did you like the spectacle?" a young schoolteacher asked me the next morning. I tried to talk about the important constitutional changes, but she waved me off. To her the proceedings had looked rigged and Gorbachev had seemed autocratic. She was particularly angry at an attempt by Gorbachev to hold a vote on removing a radical, Aleksei Kazannik, from the list of candidates who had been properly nominated for Chairman of the Supreme Soviet. Before Gorbachev backed down, Kudryavtsev, the solemn legal expert, had had to go to the lectern to warn that such a deletion would violate the rules. "It was disgusting, Gorbachev trying to take Kazannik's name off the ballot," the teacher said. "He's a lawyer, and we know more about the law than he does." Her exasperation was widely shared by my Soviet friends. The Congress seemed to have reinforced cynicism.



WHETHER the doubts prove well founded will depend largely on how vigorously the Supreme Soviet uses its powers. As President, Gorbachev can no longer preside over its sessions and run its administrative apparatus, but that job has fallen to his close ally Lukyanov, who has not displayed much independence. The legislature is trying to "invent itself," as Bill Keller, of the *Times*, has written, and its members are feeling their way.

After the Congress adjourned, I took a look at the Supreme Soviet to see how it was working. Its two houses—the Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities—meet sometimes separately and sometimes jointly, in a building just inside Spassky Gate, which leads from Red Square into the Kremlin. Unlike the Palace of Congresses, which is simply a large auditorium and is often used for opera and ballet, the Supreme Soviet's chamber is constructed for legislative business. It has white marble walls and curved rows of dark wooden desks with folding seats upholstered in red leather. A visitors' gallery overlooks the floor, but ordinary citizens cannot gain access to it; only officials, diplomats, and reporters are admitted. Committee meetings, which are usually held in office buildings outside the Kremlin, are even more restricted. I was informed that as a journalist I could attend a meeting if the committee chairman approved, so I asked to observe a session of the Committee on Legislation on a Tuesday in the midst of the Lithuanian crisis, when a bill on secession was being considered. I was politely turned down, and was invited to be present on Thursday instead. But when Thursday came the meeting was cancelled. The Soviet press seems to show little interest in committee work.

"So far, we have no real parliament," Stankevich told me. "We are a semi-parliament. This parliament cannot be a real balance to Gorbachev. A lot of people in this hall do not even know how to use their rights under the rules. They never read them. So there are two different stories. The first is to have constitutional guarantees, and the second is to have a strong Supreme Soviet."

Members of the Supreme Soviet have various assessments of the prospects for a truly independent legislature. Those who have visited Washington and have seen the hordes of aides jammed into the offices of congressmen and committees invariably return to Moscow with one word on their lips: "staff." A Soviet legislator may have a few part-time assistants or volunteers, or, if he works in an academic institute, he may be able to call on colleagues for research help, but he has no equivalent of the Library of Congress and its Congressional Research Service, whose experts provide a constant flow of information. And, as Soviet deputies are discovering, information is power.

Under the new constitutional provisions, practically anyone can introduce legislation—not only deputies but also the President, the Council of Ministers, the governments of republics and smaller regions, the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Supervisory Commission, the Prosecutor General, and certain other officials. If a member of the Supreme Soviet introduced a bill, I asked Stankevich, could he really see it all the way through the committee and onto the floor? "At this time, it is almost impossible, unfortunately," he said. "We are trapped by the government's monopoly on legislative initiative. The government can work out a lot of bills and can flood the Supreme Soviet, because the government can control the institutions—think tanks, academies, and so on. It has computers, experts, staff. It's impossible to work out a really serious bill if you work in your kitchen alone."

It was a Sunday afternoon. Stankevich, in jeans and a brown sweater, was receiving constituents in his neighborhood office, a two-room ground-floor apartment. Many of his visitors had complaints about inadequate housing, leaky roofs, garbage in courtyards, drunken youths, local officials who wouldn't help them. Usually, Stankevich could do little more than refer them to the best office for assistance, because the bureaucracy has not yet grown respectful of legislators' power.

One reason is the Supreme Soviet's lack of detailed budgetary control. As Stankevich learned from writing his doctoral dissertation on Congress and then visiting Washington, if information is power so is money. "For the first time in the history of this country since the twenties, we voted for the budget," he told me. "But we still have no full information on the structure of our budget. We insisted on having more information, and we received for the first time the amount and structure of our foreign aid. But that is only the first step. I think one of the most important things for us now is to work out a real budget procedure and to consider our budget item by item, very specifically, and program by program. That would be a much more serious revolution than the creation of the President."

Sobchak is also a budget enthusiast, and when I went to see him, in the Hotel Moskva, where out-of-town legislators are housed, he complained at length—but always with an engaging smile—that all budgetary changes were made in the executive branch, without legislative oversight. "Until we have full power to review all the articles of the budget for each depart-

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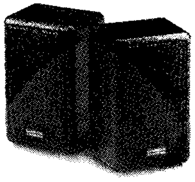

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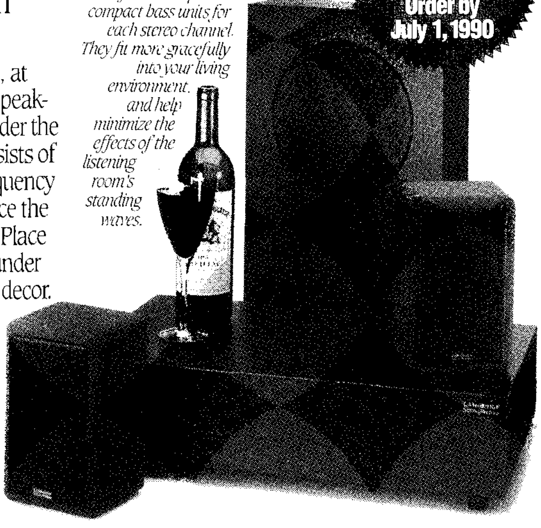

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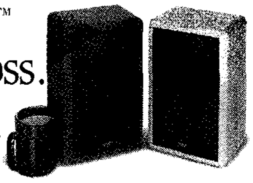

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ment of government, we have nothing," he said. Just getting basic information is difficult. Only in January did he receive a list of other countries' debts to the Soviet Union, which he had requested last November. In an effort to address this problem, the Congress passed a constitutional amendment requiring that the executive branch answer deputies' questions within three days. But some committees, such as those on defense and foreign affairs, he said, are reluctant to challenge the government and question policy. The defense committee conducts its hearings in secret, and the foreign-affairs committee, headed by a former diplomat, is on very friendly terms with the Foreign Ministry.

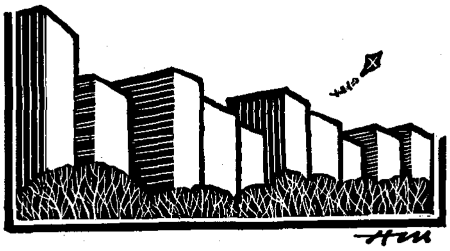
Sobchak was wearing his New York Stock Exchange tie again, and it swung to and fro as he leaned forward and back, throwing out thoughts about the calibre of the new legislators and their complex relationships with the Party and the executive branch. First, he said, transferring power from the Party to the government would not be a clean or easy process. "You're going to observe a torrent of people going from the Party apparatus to the government apparatus, and in that way preserving their places." Second, the Supreme Soviet still has its share of Party apparatchiks and cardboard characters—but not for long, he thinks. "I believe that as the parliament works steadily it will improve all the time. Most of the deputies who knit during the sessions—there are various women there who sit with their knitting or do something else, who aren't prepared—they won't be there. They'll leave on their own. I can give you an example. In my subcommittee on economic legislation, there is a weaver from Turkmenistan who makes rugs—a woman, a worker. She may be a fine person, but I haven't seen her a single time. Where is she? What's wrong with her? She doesn't come to committee meetings. She doesn't interfere. These are mannequins, political mannequins, who are very convenient, because they don't oppose—and they say and do what they're told. I think this will take two or three years to work out, and when that happens the Supreme Soviet will be more and more independent. And I think that Gorbachev himself is interested in that, because the independence of the Supreme Soviet guarantees him his own independence."

Gorbachev "is a genuine politician," Sobchak said. "And that's what differentiates him from us. We are all dilettantes." He chuckled. "The majority of us have never been professional politicians, and, naturally, we make mistakes. But our lack of readiness for this political game is the strength of the new deputies, because we are very dependent on the mood of the people, on the voters. We're not disengaged. Your congressmen are disengaged. We are not yet. We live the interests of the people, and that is our strength. It is our weakness that we are not yet professionals, but that, too, is our strength."

I asked whether Gorbachev and his people understand this.

"They understand that we actually represent the people," Sobchak said. "I personally displease many of our leaders, but nevertheless they need to take us into account. Yesterday, that wasn't necessary. Yesterday, they never took legislators into account. But today they need to take us into account. That's part of the democratization of our order."

This is a hard lesson for government officials, as Roy Medvedev explained during our late-night talk in his apartment. "It isn't going to happen in one day," he said. "In our country, ministers are used to having absolute independence in their activities. They are used to answering only to the Politburo, and when we confirmed the ministers they saw that we criticized, rejected candidates, questioned them sharply, and they began to worry. They understood that the Supreme Soviet is not a tame organization. And even young jurists, such as Stankevich—whom ministers wouldn't even talk to earlier, let alone receive in their offices—here in committee can ruin their nominations. This is psychologically very difficult for ministers—they are now subordinate not only to the Politburo but to many committees of the Supreme Soviet. A person cannot transform himself in one day. A worker in the Central Committee of the Party is used to picking up the phone, calling, and having something done, because the Party ruled the state. The Politburo decided the main questions. And now a committee of the Supreme Soviet decides questions. You have to get used to that." On the other hand, he added, many committee members suffer from the habit of deference to authority. "Many, raised in the old traditions, still wait for some kind of instruction," he said. "They do not behave independently, as they should."



When I asked Medvedev to measure the actual performance of the Congress and the Supreme Soviet against the ideal, he put it at about fifteen per cent democratic. "I cannot say that I expected very much," he mused. "I would even say that parliament turned out better than I expected, because the first election was full of many bureaucratic procedures, making voters' meetings into a kind of sieve through which it was difficult for independent deputies to pass. Many distinguished people fell by the wayside. The people who got in were people the apparatus wanted. They have sufficient control over the whole parliament. But even a hundred independent deputies among two thousand changes the character of the parliament, because any deputy may speak on any theme; he may stand and ask a question, conduct an interrogation, find a way of expressing any opinion. You can say a lot of interesting things in three minutes."

Sometimes it seems that Soviet citizens are divided not only between Communists and capitalists or between authoritarians and democrats but also between optimists and pessimists. That division certainly provoked many arguments around my friends' dinner tables in Moscow, and it accounted for some of the differences between legislators. Stankevich was a pessimist, Sobchak an optimist, Afanasyev a profoundly gloomy pessimist, and Medvedev a little of both.

Aleksandr Yakovlev, the devout believer in constitutional democracy, was cautious about the prospects, but he made an encouraging assessment of the Supreme Soviet in its infancy. "We are just rising from the cradle," he said, with a grin. "This baby isn't doing badly when you consider his age and his not very good family tradition." Yakovlev has a simple theory of human nature, and it has been bolstered by his

Schoolteacher on Vacation

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parliamentary experience. He is not a member of the Supreme Soviet, but nonmembers can be on its committees, and he belongs to the Committee on Legislation, through which all bills are filtered. From that perspective he has seen inexperienced deputies grow into their responsibilities—a pattern that reminds him of something he noticed when he observed trials in the United States and Britain. He was impressed by how ordinary people without legal training became attentive, serious jurors who tried hard to be just. "The logic of the situation dictates something in behavior," he said. "Nobody will teach you democracy except yourself. For this you must first change social roles, social institutions, and the social organization of a country, and you will have different people. Even people who are sinful, who are lying, who are being brutal, who are antidemocratic—in this democratic culture, a turn in their personality may occur. Not everybody, of course."

Those who have risen to their legislative roles still find themselves bucking a powerful executive branch. Aleksei Yablokov, a gruff, gray-bearded marine biologist, who is the deputy chairman of the Committee on Ecology, serves as a dramatic example. He is a respected scientist with good contacts in the Council of Ministers, and in trying to clean up the environment he is riding the crest of the country's most popular political wave. Yet he confronts an industrial establishment that is about as ecological-minded as America's.

Late one Saturday afternoon, when I went to see him at his apartment, on Vavilov Street, he was wearing a souvenir from America, a blue sweatshirt with the legend "Minnesota Power—Always at Your Service." On a table in his study lay the January-February issue of the journal of the Environmental Protection Agency, in Washington. When his phone rang, it was a friendly call from the chairman of the State Committee for the Protection of Nature—the agency through which an environmental bill was being circulated throughout government for comment. The measure, on protecting the natural environment, was the first of four bills that Yablokov hoped to see passed; the others would establish more national parks, protect vegetation, and set standards for nuclear safety.

Yablokov explained that an "official draft"—one with the imprimatur of Gorbachev and his staff—must be cleared by numerous agencies, and that this prerequisite is especially threatening to environmental legislation, since government is pervasive in the Soviet economy. The ministries run the factories and the mines, so passing a law to limit pollution means getting, in effect, the approval of the polluters. The bill in question was referred to the Ministry of Justice, "which examines it to make sure it's juridically sound," Yablokov said, and then was distributed to every industrial ministry at both the national and the republic levels. After a couple of months, it came back emasculated. "This bill includes about ninety articles," he said. "Eighty-five articles will be changed. Only five will stay unchanged. It will be a very bad law, but we need an official draft. Of course, we can work in the other direction—we can prepare our own draft. But there would be an endless battle."

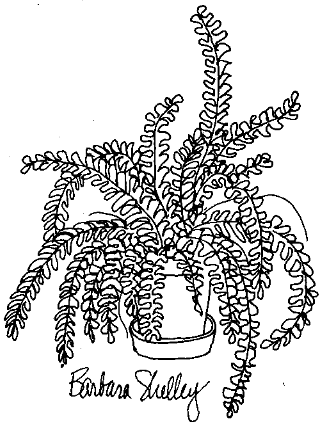
Last month, when Gorbachev's aides proposed a bill providing up to six years in prison for insulting the President, the Supreme Soviet reacted about as independently as the United States Congress did when George Bush wanted to send Americans to jail for burning the flag: in neither case did legislators protect free speech. The Soviet action came after Gorbachev was derided by jeering demonstrators at the first free and open May Day parade in Red Square, and left with his entourage. He later called the protesters "rabble," and civil libertarians on the Supreme Soviet could do no more than water down his bill before it was passed, adding the condition that insults would be punishable only if they were expressed "in an indecent way," whatever that means.

Increasingly, liberal legislators have called on outside experts to write bills that can be used as leverage against official texts. The purpose is to force compromise. One such outside author, a lawyer named Ernest Ametistov, has helped draft a measure that would guarantee freedom of association; in the process, it would turn upside down some basic assumptions of Soviet law. We sat in his study one day, drinking thick, sweet cherry nectar from green bottles, while a blond cat watched over us from a chair.

Ametistov said that the bill would establish the right of citizens to "unite around their interests and form any kind of social organization—of a political character, let's say, or a trade union, or lovers of Siamese cats, and so on." He had given his draft to Sobchak. The government also had a version, and the difference between them was profound, he said. The government's was written on the traditional Soviet assumption that whatever was not permitted was prohibited. That is, it listed the kinds of organizations that could be formed. "It has almost no guarantees on the preservation of rights," he said. His draft did the opposite: it listed only types of organizations that were banned, including those advocating the violent overthrow of the government and preaching racial or ethnic hatred. The effort was to introduce a peculiarly American concept of the origins of rights: in Soviet legal thinking, rights are granted and defined by the state; in the American Constitution, rights exist naturally, and the state is enjoined from trespassing on them, except as the people expressly permit. "This is the same principle that ought to apply to all law," Ametistov said. "In my view, as a jurist, the law must be used only to prohibit, not to permit. It must warn citizens precisely: this is forbidden, that is forbidden, everything else is permitted."

But how was it possible to imbue the citizenry with such a radical idea, and then shrink government's scope and create a culture in which people believed in their rights and respected the law?

"Oy," Ametistov groaned. "That is a very difficult question. For this we need to change the upbringing of people, first of all. This people, in the course of hundreds of years, has been raised in a psychological paternalism. In the beginning was a czar, then a leader, the Party, which was the main source of rights and obligations. Everything came from above. Here people never felt the idea of natural rights. In the rest of the world, hundreds of years were required for the idea of natural rights to penetrate human psychology. If a person receives his rights and freedom from nature, from birth, he also begins to understand that he must use these rights and freedoms so they do not violate the same rights of others. And from here a feeling of lawfulness arises. But we do not have this. We live not under the Constitution and not by law but by directives or by instructions from ministries."



That is why it is essential to ban organizations preaching ethnic or racial hatred, he argued. When I pointed out that such a prohibition would impinge on free speech, Ametistov replied that the Soviet Union was not the United States. "You can obviously permit it," he told me. "I know that your Supreme Court rulings permit the creation of organizations that even pursue the goals of violence or preach racial hatred. That can be permitted only by a society that is very sure of itself, a stable society. Our society now finds itself in such conditions that any violence is very frightening."

ONE organization that would be banned under Ametistov's law is Pamyat—the name means "memory." It is a loose association of the most extreme Russian nationalists, who believe that the dignity and the purity of Russian religion and culture have been contaminated by Jews and by the alien ideas of the West, including Marxism and, lately, private enterprise and democracy. Pamyat's propaganda is quite crude. A Xeroxed leaflet distributed in March was headlined "PAMYAT DEMANDS!" and featured a drawing of a Slavic-looking man holding a booklet entitled "Law on the De-Zionization of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: On the Abolition of the Privileged Situation of the Jews." The text, partly typed and partly handwritten, asserted that, while Slavic peoples worked mostly in mines and factories, "Yids" were found in the more privileged fields of retailing, literature, science, the press, culture, medicine, and the courts. "As long as Jews dominate the courts, investigative organs, and prosecutors' offices, as long as 15,000 of the 27,000 defense attorneys are Jews, it will be impossible to create a genuine law-based state," it said.

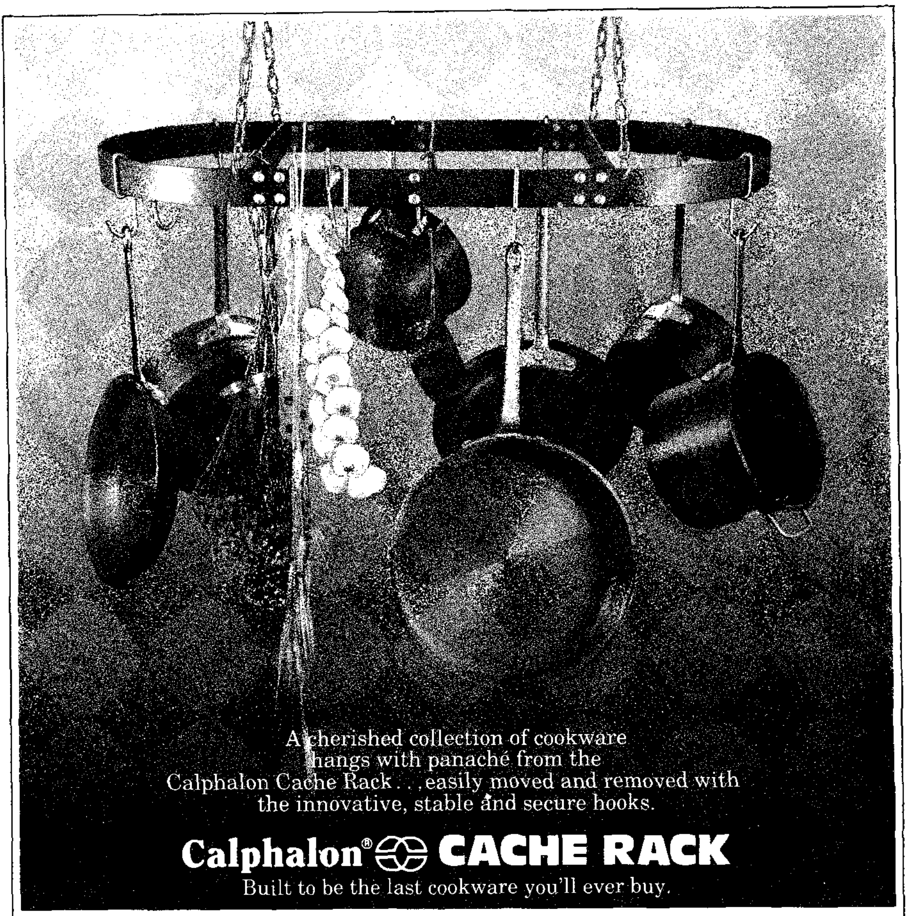
Despite the country's long history of anti-Semitism and a strong groundswell of attachment to a Russian identity, the chauvinists have not done well in elections. Friends told me that the week before the runoff elections for the Russian Republic's Supreme Soviet, leaflets smearing a half-Jewish candidate named Anatoly Shabad were put in mailboxes along Dmitri Ulyanov Street, in his district. A cartoon showed Andrei Sakharov's widow, Elena Bonner, whose mother was Jewish, in a harness pulling Sakharov's coffin through a gate into the Kremlin. On top sat Shabad, with his name spelled "Shabash," which connotes "disorder," "chaos." The caption said, "Such people are pushing to power. You must get out and vote, because they certainly will."

Shabad won anyway, and most Russian nationalists lost. One of them was Ilya Glazunov, an artist, who has advocated a return to Russian monarchy. During the nineteen-seventies, he became a folk hero for canvases that celebrated the purity of the Russian soul struggling against the scourge of Communism. In the summer of 1978, and again in 1988, shows of his work were viewed by thousands of people a day, who came from across the country and lined up for hours. But his appeal has waned. One afternoon, in the Metro station at Red Square, I saw a young entrepreneur behind a table stacked with large color prints for sale, among them copies of a Glazunov painting with the title "The Mystery of the Twentieth Century." A decade ago, Muscovites would have killed to get a copy. Now people gave nothing more than a casual glance as they hurried by. At the polls, Glazunov received only twenty-eight per cent of the vote in his district—partly because he is resented as a wealthy man, a Soviet journalist told me. Other nationalists who lost were Stanislav Kunyayev, the editor of the conservative magazine *Nash Sovremennik*, and Ernst Safonov, the editor of *Literaturnaya Rossiya*. In the four-hundred-and-ninety-seat Moscow City Council, Russian nationalists in a movement called Otechestvo, or Fatherland, won only ten seats. Control of the council fell to a liberal insurgency calling itself Democratic Russia, which spoke of turning the capital into a free-market zone. The new council elected Gavriil Popov, a radical economist, mayor and Sergei Stankevich deputy mayor.

A Muscovite would have had trouble finding out about this in his newspapers, though. For days after the elections, I combed the press and watched television news, only to discover that, *glasnost* notwithstanding, Soviet journalism remained profoundly uninformative. A list of victorious candidates and brief biographies was published in *Izvestia*, but no affiliations with Demoatic Russia or Otechestvo or the ommunist Party apparatus were menoned, nor was there any news story umming up the results. *Sovietskaya ossiya*, the daily of the Russian Republic's Communist Party, reported hat ninety-three per cent of the new eputies in the republic's Supreme Soiet had higher education, thirty-nine er cent were engineers, nine per cent ere doctors, five and four-tenths per ent were women, and so forth, but said othing about their political alignents. The paper, which is conservaive, even had a misleading little story aying, "The voters displayed broad rust in Communists. In parliament, embers of the C.P.S.U. are more than 5 per cent." But many radical reformrs are Communists, so the statistic evealed nothing to the voter. A limpse past this opaque description of he election returns was provided by the laring liberal weekly *Moscow News:* t told its readers about Democratic Russia's good showing. But, since the aper itself supports Democratic Russia, reading the results there, and only here, creates "a worm of doubt," as one Soviet friend put it.

I asked several journalists, scholars, and candidates why they thought the Russian nationalists had done so poorly. Kunyayev told me that about eighty per cent of the press had pushed for Democratic Russia and had given little space to Otechestvo. Others disputed this explanation, noting that Glazunov, for example, received considerable television exposure. Some believed that the nationalists, who find the idea of democracy distasteful, simply campaigned poorly, while liberals often went door to door. Also, many Russian nationalists were endorsed by the Communist Party apparatus, and that support proved to be the kiss of death.

Sergei Plekhanov, the deputy director of the Institute for U.S.A. and Canada Studies, drew several lessons from the outcome. "The leaflets appealing to anti-Semitism backfired," he told me in his downtown office a few days after the election. "In a situation where people are hysterical or don't have a chance to express their views openly, those ideas gain force. When nobody has actually seen Pamyat, then you have a mythology develop. But in a normal, open situation they fall apart. When you let them into the open, and you put them on television, people don't like them. Their appeal is so false. It's



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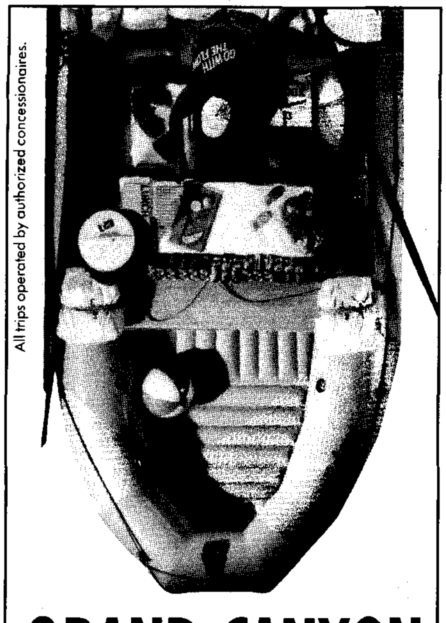

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contrived, the same as fascism. The election shows that people were voting for democracy."

Perhaps. But there is a yearning in the Soviet Union for an orderly system of belief to replace the discredited ideology of Marxism-Leninism and the fragmenting symbol of Soviet patriotism. Ethnic identity can be a powerful substitute, for Russians as well as for Armenians and Azerbaijanis, for Lithuanians and Estonians and Latvians. And the politics of anger and protest now seem at least as powerful as the politics of democratic ideas; Soviet voters have generally cast their ballots against rather than for—against the Communist establishment, against the privileged, against Marxist dogmatism.

Gorbachev acknowledged the potential strength of Russian nationalists when he named two of them to his new Presidential Council—an advisory body whose duties have not yet been defined. One was Veniamin Yarin, a machine operator from the Urals, who has helped organize a populist, blue-collar movement that opposes Western economic principles. The other was Valentin Rasputin, a Siberian novelist, who dislikes Western democracy and writes nostalgically of the lost soul of the Russian village. A friend of the writer told me that Rasputin, reluctant to join, was talked into it by a personal appeal from Gorbachev, who was behaving like a politician intent on seeming responsive to all interests. Among his appointees were also liberals, such as Chingiz Aitmatov, a writer from Kirghizia, who has supported his reforms.

LATE on the Sunday evening after the Congress adjourned, I went to see a playwright named Aleksandr Gelman, at his apartment, on Tverskoi Boulevard, not far from McDonald's. The golden arches and the large glass windows looked like a mirage of chrome and neon, from which a long, thick line snaked away into the gloom of a Moscow night. Russians are used to lines, but there seemed something especially demeaning in standing hours in the cold for a Big Mac. That was on my mind when I sat down with Gelman, a friendly, dishevelled man wearing a sweatshirt and chinos, in a room strewn with papers and videocassettes.

Gelman is a deputy in the Congress, and I asked how he felt about the two fears expressed there, of dictatorship and of anarchy, and how he put those fears together with the patience and resilience of a nation that can line up quietly for paltry goods.

"I don't think there's going to be dictatorship, but the fear of anarchy strikes me as more realistic," he said. "You can't change things quickly, and there isn't any patience. It's a bit idealistic to say that the Russian people are patient. It's not true. People are patient only when it is dangerous to be impatient; when there is no danger, they are not patient. They perceive that there is no strength at the top. There is a danger of a massive uprising, massive protests. There is a spiritual vacuum. Something disappeared, not just economically but psychologically." He laughed at the radicals' criticisms of Gorbachev. "They said he was cunning, insincere, and dishonest. But if he hadn't been cunning, insincere, and dishonest they wouldn't have been able to say what they thought."

I asked what he had learned about his country that he had not known before he became a legislator.

He paused, and then said, "I learned that people are more mature than I thought—in their ideas, when they went to vote. I thought they could be manipulated, but they figured out whom to vote for, whom to trust. The Party apparatus turned out to be more orderly and intelligent than I had thought. I didn't know there was such sharp anti-Semitism. I knew there was anti-Semitism, that there were such groups, but it seems that writers were too shy earlier to express it openly. It was unexpected to find many military officers who were supporters of democracy. That was a pleasant surprise."

With his legislative duties, Gelman has had trouble finding blocks of uninterrupted time in which to write. Nevertheless, he was just finishing a new play, called "Coffee with Cognac," about "a talented man who spent much of his adult life under Brezhnev and never realized his abilities or his ideas," he explained. "He hates *perestroika* because it comes too late; he hates freedom."

I said I had heard from friends that theatre was in a slump.

Gelman agreed. "The political stage is so interesting, so comic, that our theatre isn't as attractive as it was," he said. "People are living in theatre. People are surrounded by theatre."

—DAVID K. SHIPLER

THE THEATRE

Interview

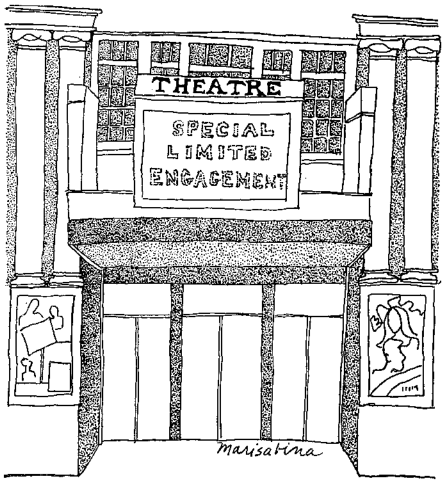
THE Roundabout is presenting, in place of the usual revival, a new play, "Price of Fame," by and with Charles Grodin, about a movie star named Roger, who feels that his reputation is teetering and tries to shore it up, with mixed results. The action takes place in the star's dressing room, a large motor home, on the set of his current picture. He has agreed to be interviewed by one Karen, for *Vanity Fair*, although giving interviews is apparently not his usual practice. Before she arrives, he is shown an ad for his most recent release, with a large photograph of a horse next to him, and that depresses and enrages him. Karen, in the capable person of Lizbeth Mackay, is trim and pretty, and one can feel the instant rapport between them; she turns on her tape recorder, and we're off. She exits for a few minutes to use his bathroom (exit opportunities are limited to a little bedroom and adjoining bath, through one door, and the movie set, through another), and he accidentally gets a look at the contents of the manila envelope she has brought with her, and finds that she has been assigned by her editor to do a hatchet job. When the editor eventually enters, the reason for this becomes clear.

The play could be described as a conversation piece between Roger and Karen—a record of what seems to be the beginning of a love affair and its abrupt end—with interruptions. Among the interrupters are Mario, a makeup man (Joseph R. Sicari), always at the ready for little adjustments around the actor's eyes; somebody (Michael Ingram) who is worried about verbal sound effects and keeps trying new ones; Roger's disaffected son, Matt (Jace Alexander), who works as a gofer and plans to quit; and Karen's editor (Sam Groom). Above all, there is Jeannie Berlin, who plays Roger's leading lady in the movie, and who is the daughter of Elaine May and an unmistakable chip off that golden block. She is onstage for only a few minutes at a time, but those few minutes stick. The casting is appropriate in each instance. In the leading role, Mr. Grodin is every inch the self-absorbed, worried, edgy Roger, completely in tune with the special world around him.

"Price of Fame" is exactly what it seems to be—a neat, harmless little comedy that tells a credible story in a credible setting—and that it is often entertaining when it tries to be. The story *should* be credible: Mr. Grodin is an experienced actor on the stage and in movies. (He appeared opposite Miss Berlin in the unforgettable "The Heartbreak Kid.") "Price of Fame" may be a little forgettable, but that is a slight sin, all things considered. The performance goes well, start to finish, under the direction of Gloria Muzio. The setting by David Jenkins, the costumes by Jess Goldstein, and the lighting by Tharon Musser are all admirable. —EDITH OLIVER

Landscape of the Psyche

SOMEWHERE toward the middle of John Guare's "Six Degrees of Separation," Stockard Channing, playing Ouisa Kittredge, the central character, makes a speech that purports to explain the meaning of the title. Miss Channing is alone onstage; the lights have dimmed, and she has taken up a position on the arm of a sofa. Throughout the speech, she gazes out at undefined spaces in the theatre, and she talks with the lost look and ever-changing face of a born storyteller. The moment has a feeling of wind-down: you might think the play was about to end. Miss Channing, moreover, is so compelling in her impersonation of someone trying to impose meaning on an experience that you just might believe her. You just might be suckered into thinking that what Miss Channing says about "six degrees of separation" was all there was to it.



Offhand, I can think of no higher praise for a play than to say it makes you proud of living in an imperfect world. "Six Degrees of Separation," which opened at the Mitzi E. Newhouse Theatre on June 14th, in a staging by the incomparable Jerry Zaks, is many things: satire, social commentary, comedy of manners, family drama, literary criticism, and academic parody. It also has moments of being like a mystery thriller, an inquiry into an apparent villainy; actually, it's an inquiry into an act of innocence, but it offers a solution to the mystery of liberal guilt.

As everyone knows by now, "Six Degrees of Separation" is based on a real-life incident that was reported in the *Times*—an elaborate hoax practiced by a young black man on a number of East Side New Yorkers. The story was pretty funny, almost as funny as Guare's play. What I found astonishing, going back to the news article, was how little Guare had to invent. The names were changed, of course, to protect the innocent (I use the word in its broadest sense and with some irony, for these were hardly unworldly people), but ludicrous details one might have attributed to Guare's imagination sprang from a germ of truth: the element of homosexuality, the importance of a Broadway musical, and, most peculiar of all, the fact that the young man, whom Guare christens Paul, presented himself as the son of a famous black actor. All the same, what amazed me most was how out of this story—apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare had fashioned a play about money, race, class, politics, art, collective conscience, and individual psyche. First of all, he changed the profession of the principal dupe, Ouisa's husband, Flan (John Cunningham), making him an art dealer; he changed the particular Broadway musical concerned; he changed the subject of the term paper Paul (James McDaniel) claims to have lost; he invented a Jewish financier from South Africa (Sam Stoneburger); and he invented a painting, a double-sided Kandinsky, which hangs above the stage.

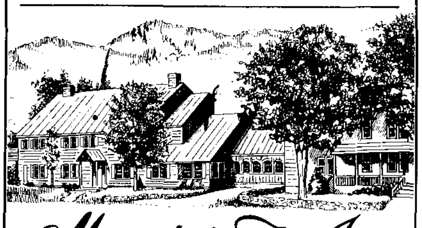
The South African financier is there partly to introduce the themes of money and politics, but everything in Guare's play is there for several different reasons, connected to several different things. Guare spins a web of familiar cultural references that are there sometimes to be commented on, sometimes to be attitudinized about, and sometimes to help create the world that Paul wants to break in upon. What we get as an explanation for liberal guilt is something about the way a certain part of society is searching for its lost children: the idea that, as one character tells another, our children are the only thing we genuinely have to acknowledge as our own in the collage of seemingly unconnected ideas and objects we furnish our lives with, and they prove unsatisfactory. Days after seeing the play, you realize that what Stockard Channing says about "six degrees of separation" makes no sense—it's wishful thinking. Guare's title isn't about people but about connections between things.

One of the characters keeps reminding us that every story has two sides. Whether or not we ever hear the other side of this one remains a question. As Stockard Channing points out, we never really find out who Paul was. Guare's version of Paul's point of view is just that—Guare's version, a product of his imagination. And though the play suggests why a young man with a great deal going for him—a young man who could clearly make something of himself—would spend so much time and effort fashioning false images of himself, Paul's actual motivation is something we're left to guess at. Guare is more interested in the question of how people like Ouisa and Flan could be preyed upon. Paul gets into their home and wins their confidence not by appearing to be in distress but by telling them that their children spoke well of them.

The impulse toward storytelling can reveal an interest in truth or in fiction. Guare's fascination with the story of this hoax came from the fact that, in spite of being unbelievable, it was true. His play is about a woman whose fascination with a story that turned out not to be true came from having believed it. Paul fascinates *us* because he actually makes us feel that the truth doesn't matter. That he does this so effectively is a result of good writing and also of good acting, particularly by Mr. McDaniel and Miss Channing. Miss Channing has such a commanding range of contemporary nuance that although Mr. Zaks works his magic here with an ensemble of seventeen, there are times when Guare's play almost seems like a vehicle for her—during the title speech, for example, or when, laughing meaninglessly at the end of a line, she looks at the audience for corroboration or in reproof. At other times, the play becomes a showcase for Mr. McDaniel, whose Paul changes so strangely from scene to scene that it's possible to think that there's more than one black male cast member or that Guare has created a character who is totally inconsistent, and, of course, he has. In a sense, there's no connection between any of the pictures we get of Paul. They're like a series of portraits of young men with nothing in common but their race, which was the single certain fact about "Paul" that Guare started out with.

Tony Walton's set for "Six Degrees" is full of empty window frames and doorframes that become picture frames when characters step into them and begin to speak. It's one of the many ways in which the play links the themes of art and storytelling. Another is the use of color, which comes to stand for so many things: race, of course, and art (the bursts of color on the double-sided Kandinsky that is the only thing we see when the lights go down between scenes); truth in narrative (the burst of color in a grim anecdote that may or may not tell us the end of Paul's story); and theatre, too. Guare's "point," in the end, is something about vibrance—the bursts of color that one longs to see, when, trying to look back on one's life, one finds oneself telling stories. "How do we keep what happened to us without turning it into an anecdote?" Ouisa asks; and something else she says links the idea of storytelling to the play's inquiry into what it means to be human. There's also an idea of "accountability," in the sense of wondering for whom or what one is responsible, and in the sense of giving an account of something. "I'm a gambler," Flan says, and the statement seems to sum up his life. But the key to Ouisa lies in the play's closing image, the result of a perfect meeting between actress, playwright, and director: the final line and then the expression in Stockard Channing's eyes as she turns, under that double-sided canvas, in Paul Gallo's slow fade and looks back at the audience one last time.

—MIMI KRAMER



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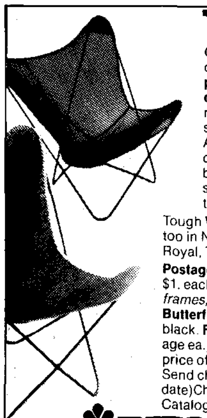

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LETTER FROM BEIJING

JUNE 6

WHEN I put from my mind the scenes of a year ago, this appears to be a wonderful time here. The city's traffic circles and sidewalk strips abound in blooming roses and red peonies; the walls of compounds even remotely accessible to tourists are freshly painted in shades of brown, beige, and white; and a year-long campaign to improve sanitation and garbage-collection facilities has achieved observable success.

In daylight, from a tourist's point of view, the city appears to afford an extraordinary summer bargain. In the aftermath of what the government now refers to as the "Tiananmen incident," of June 4, 1989, the occupancy rate of many hotels has been fifty per cent or less, and *China Daily*, the official English-language newspaper, conceded this week that through March of this year the number of foreign-tourist arrivals—fewer than half a million—is twenty-two per cent below last year's figure. The result of that loss in income to China is apparent everywhere in the city, in the form of warmer welcomes, increased services, and a moderate drop in some prices even beyond the drop caused by a devaluation of China's foreign-exchange currency, which took place last December. In September, when I left China after working here for two years, the official rate of exchange was 3.72 yuan to the dollar. Now a dollar in a traveller's check commands 4.71 yuan.

After midnight, however, when tourists are pressured to be tucked away in their hotels, Beijing appears transformed into an occupied city subjugated by military force. Menacing, rifle-pointing troopers, who may or may not be wearing police insignia, replace the usually courteous white-jacketed Beijing traffic police, and establish roadblocks at many of the city's intersections, where they check the identification of drivers, cyclists, and even pedestrians. My wife and I had our first experience of this in the early morning of May 23rd, when the taxi bringing us in from the airport was stopped twice—once in the center of the city, and once at Bai Shi Quao, a principal intersection of Haidian District, as the neighborhood around Beijing's principal universities is called. On both occasions, our driver leaped from his seat and jumped the line of those waiting to be interrogated, pleading for priority on the ground that he was carrying foreigners. His appeal succeeded after a trooper accompanied him back to the cab and confirmed that we were not Chinese and were therefore exempt from identity checks.

Most of our Beijing friends are not so privileged. They are required to produce not only *hukou*—official Beijing-residence cards—but also a plausible explanation of what they are doing on the street at that hour. Typical, perhaps, is the experience of a young woman who was stopped outside a tourist hotel where she had gone bowling with two male friends. The three were separated for identity checks and then lengthily interrogated about their residences, their work units, and their relations with each other: which of the two men was her real boyfriend, the officers wanted to know, and had she made love with either of them, and how much money had they given her to go with them?

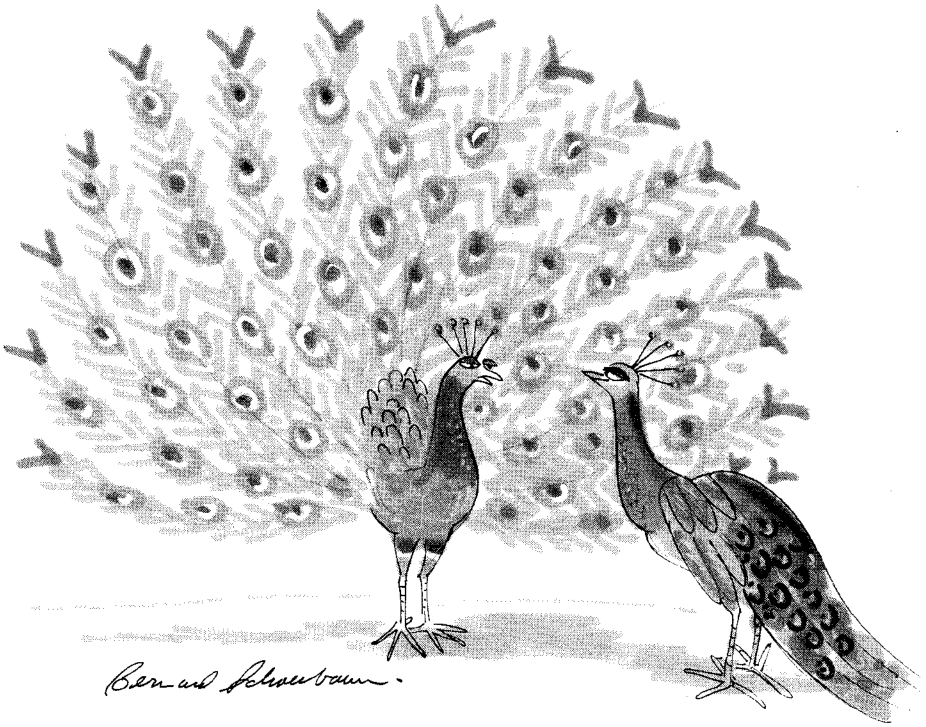
"I said that it was none of their business and refused to answer," she told me.

"Did you really?" I asked.

"No," she admitted. "I was too afraid."

After twenty minutes, and after the men had given answers that corresponded with hers, the three were allowed to pass.

EVEN in daylight hours—and five months after the announcement that martial law had been lifted in Beijing—it is possible to spot detachments of helmeted troopers around town; a few days ago, I encountered a squad of them, rifles in hand, shuffling off a subway train at Hopingmen, the station stop before Tiananmen. A Beijing friend who was with me surmised that the soldiers were members of a force that was reported, after the lifting of martial law, to have been detached as a unit from the People's Liberation Army and transferred to the nominal control of the People's Armed Police, who are under the Public Security Bureau. Chinese military and police uniforms are almost identical—a change in collar insignia would nearly suffice to signalize the transfer. But, whatever force these armed men in Beijing belong to, they appear to have confirmed a prediction of the United States consul here, Fabio Saturni, that they would be "particularly on edge" in the period leading up to the Tiananmen anniversary. In a diplomatically worded letter, dated April 2nd, Saturni told American residents that although "the Embassy has no information which suggests a repeat of last spring's unrest which culminated in the Tiananmen Square tragedy or which indicates any special

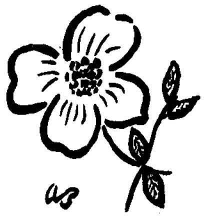


Bernard Schoenbaum

"Oh, thank you, I only wish I felt as good as I look."

threat to the safety of Americans,” it might nonetheless be prudent for them to “review” their “personal emergency-preparedness planning.”

The consul’s letter noted that Tiananmen Square is “particularly sensitive to the authorities, who will be on the alert for any activities they deem to be threatening to social order,” but it omitted any mention of three Haidian campuses where, as it turned out, demonstrations marking the June 4th anniversary were held. The most important of the three, at least in the opinion of foreign reporters and of local security men looking for signs of subversion, is Bei Da, or Beijing University, and a week ago, when its gate guards were a little more relaxed than they are right now, a friend smuggled me onto its campus. From the back seat of a taxi, he waved his faculty-admission card and I waved an official-looking but empty credentials folder as we passed through the checkpoint. The campus was quiet, but not as quiet as it became on June 3rd, when students began a “public silence” campaign to commemorate those of their fellows who were killed at Tiananmen. Dried paste and paint insufficiently eradicated from the exterior of buildings still marked the surfaces appropriated by the demonstrators of a year ago to erect their *dazibao*, or big-character posters, but the “triangle” of bulletin boards, buildings, and stores which is generally considered the campus’s focal point was almost deserted. Only three or four students stopped to glance at photographs of a recent track meet or announcements of academic forums and student tours. (Beijing academic organizations, eager to encourage students to be out of town on June 4th, had scheduled several “outings” for that weekend.) Many of the billboards were altogether empty, and, whether as a protest or out of negligence, the glass covering several was broken. A year ago, walking through this campus, I would have been greeted by many of the students I encountered. Last week, the only person who spoke to me was a store clerk, who was obligated to do so, as he sold me a college sweatshirt from which the “Science and Democracy” slogan that had been a feature of last year’s campus fashions was notably absent.



Although I have been warmly and graciously welcomed here, by colleagues from my former work unit—Xinhua, the New China News Agency—I can now understand and sympathize with the Chinese, students and workers alike, who are afraid to be seen speaking to me or to any other foreign strangers in public. The arrest of several students who, on June 3rd, dared to approach me at Beijing’s well-known English Corner had a far more inhibiting effect on my demeanor on the streets of Beijing than recent Foreign Ministry instructions to foreign journalists that they should not attempt to interview or converse with Chinese citizens without permission. The English Corner was established several years ago, with official sanction, in a grove of trees in the southwest corner of Purple Bamboo Park, one of Beijing’s most pleasant areas, the idea being that foreigners would be welcome there on Sunday mornings to converse with Chinese wishing to practice their English. I went there a number of times during my two years in Beijing, and since it was commonly assumed that at least one of the would-be linguists was a tape-recording security agent the discussions tended to be politically innocuous. Nevertheless, I valued these encounters, because they gave me some insight into the sentiments of Chinese who, for the most part, were not among the city’s formal scholars but appeared to be night-school students or workers teaching themselves English through the radio.

Last October, after my departure from the city, the English Corner was officially closed—notice boards to that effect were set up around the grove—but people who wanted to learn English still congregated there on Sunday mornings, and when I revisited it on the last Sunday morning in May I had no difficulty in finding eight or nine Chinese eager to talk to me. Prudently, they urged me to “take a walk” with them, and we found a nearby pavilion where we talked for nearly two hours. These young people, most of whom were in their late twenties or early thirties, appeared to have become much more willing to discuss politics, and, to my surprise, nearly all of them appeared truly to support the policies of the Chinese government, including its crackdown on the students in Tiananmen Square.

I chose not to point out what I saw as a paradox: here were people violating a *gui-ding*, or regulation, to argue in favor of “stability” and the observance of other regulations. Similarly several grumbled about the lack of news provided in China’s controlled press—one maintained that the democratization of Eastern Europe had been covered only in “seven-line stories,” and that the fall of Nicolae Ceausescu had been acknowledged only by an oblique note of congratulations to his successor—but the consensus was that a free, uncontrolled press would be “too dangerous for China.”

This encounter ended without incident, but some of my auditors on the following Sunday at the English Corner were less fortunate. Two men in bluejeans and white T-shirts—I took them at first for additional practitioners of English—abruptly began demanding the identification papers of several people who were talking to me and to another Westerner, Gunnar Filseth, who is the Asia correspondent of the Oslo *Aftenposten*. Then, together with two uniformed officers, who followed their orders, they marched five young men away. Filseth and I followed the procession to a concrete building nearby, but the uniformed officers turned back and ordered us to *zou ba*, or get moving, and some Chinese onlookers persuaded us to do so, on the ground that our continued presence would only make it worse for the five young men. “They will be asked what you said to them and what they said to you, and yelled at for being unpatriotic, but they will be let go in an hour or so if you’re no longer here,” one of the onlookers assured us. “They probably won’t even report them to their work units.”

IF that is so, and I fervently hope it is, those young government supporters will presumably have fared better than three self-proclaimed dissidents who openly attempted to make contact with Western newsmen. So far, the fate of these three—Hou Dejian, a Taiwan native and popular singer; Gao Xin, a university lecturer; and Zhou Duo, an economist—is unknown. They had been hunger strikers in Tiananmen Square last June, and this spring they announced that they would hold a press conference at Hou’s house on May 31st to demand the release of political prisoners. Reporters who went to Hou’s home at the appointed time, however, were shown only a handwritten note saying "Since I have something to do, I'm not going to hold the press conference."

Also still unknown is what happened to Li Minqi, who addressed a two-hour rally at Beijing University on the night of June 3rd. There was a good deal of marching at the rally, and many students threw glass bottles from their dormitory windows—Xiaoping, the given name of China's senior leader, Deng, is a homonym for "little bottle"—but as far as is known there was no violence until the following night. Then a group of journalists watching outside Bei Da's west gate (the gate I had bluffed my way through a few days earlier) was set upon by several vanfuls of helmeted, rifle-pointing policemen. Jonathan Mirsky, the China correspondent of the London *Observer*, told me that he and several other journalists ran for their car but were unable to move it before they were surrounded by police and ordered out of it at gunpoint. "We heard them cocking their rifles," Mirsky said, "and I remember thinking how ironic it was that this was happening exactly three hundred and sixty-five days and twenty minutes after I was attacked and beaten up in Tiananmen Square. We got out of the car, and they spread-eagled us against a wall and made one fellow, a Swedish journalist who had left his documents home, get down on his knees, and put a gun to his face. I really thought, This is it, the end. But then an officer came up and made them raise their guns out of our faces. They looked at our documents, and then we were told 'Get in your car and go.' The Swedish fellow was still being held on his knees, though, so I said, 'That's my friend over there,' and I walked over and pulled him up, and as we turned back to the car I had the feeling that they might shoot us after all. But they let us go."

How this attack on reporters, who remained legally outside the walls of Bei Da, and the recent nighttime roadblocks set up by paramilitary troopers carrying apparently functioning weapons square with the government's recent proclamation that "stability is above everything" is difficult to understand. Nevertheless, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party chose to mark the June 4th anniversary by publishing in the *People's Daily* an editorial that, in addition to laying the blame for last year's demonstrations on "hostile forces at home and abroad," urged the Chinese people to "safeguard stability of the country just like safeguarding our own lives."

ON the morning of June 4th, disregarding the consul's advice, I took the subway to Tiananmen Square. I found it secured by a ring of policemen guarding several hundred buses, vans, and cars parked in the center of the square—the area that most of the student hunger strikers occupied last year. (The day before, Chinese leaders had gathered in the adjoining Great Hall of the People to commemorate the hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the Opium War.) The drivers of these vehicles had been summoned to the square to participate in safe-driving exercises, in preparation for the Asian Games, which are to be held here in September and October. Presumably, they were told about a "good-manners competition" under way in Beijing "to publicize the idea of courtesy and contribute to the success" of the games. In fact, the games have become the excuse for all sorts of public-security activity, including a Campaign to Severely Crack Down on Serious Crimes, similar to one ordered in 1983 by Deng himself. On that occasion, the officially quoted motto was "The heavier the sentences, and the sooner they are passed, the better!" Thousands were executed in that drive, and now Beijing is dotted with posters announcing the names of eleven "serious criminals" who were rounded up in a drive to "cleanse" the city of those who "perturb social order and public security in the capital and disturb the smooth functioning of the Asian Games." The names are marked with red checks, indicating that the men have been shot.

Later that afternoon, after my visit to Tiananmen Square, the buses, vans, and cars were driven away, the police were withdrawn, and the square was reopened—as it now remains open—to Chinese and foreigners alike who wish to cross it. Nevertheless, in recent days several thousand "criminals" have either been imprisoned or deported from Beijing, and policemen and presumed policemen continue to sweep through the city's streets at night, and through its secluded residences by day, ordering one and all to produce their *hukou*.

—FRED C. SHAPIRO

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IN FASHION

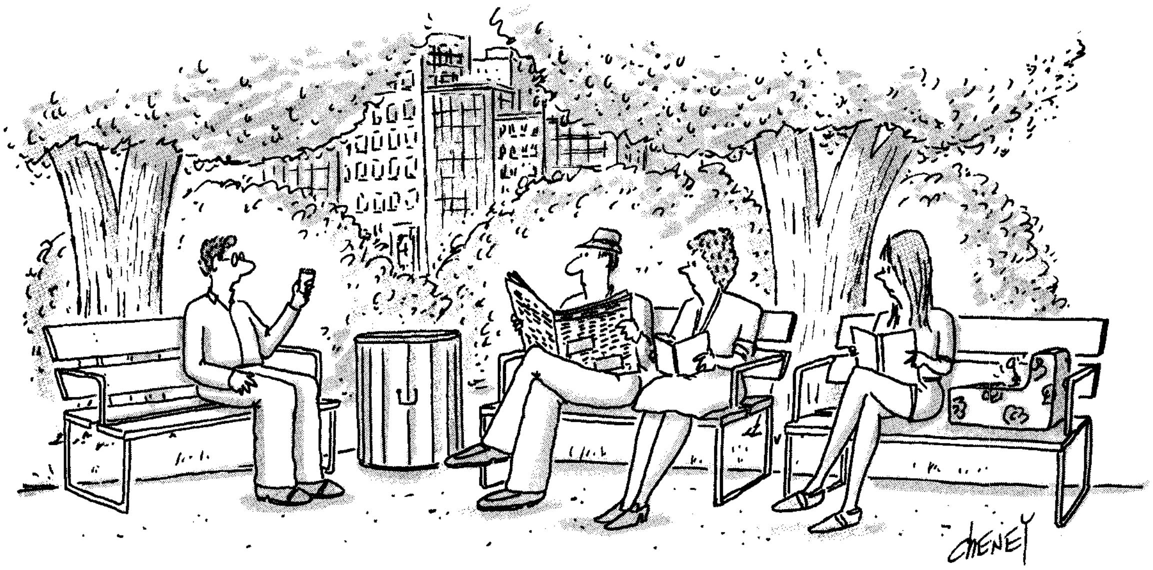
Forward Motion

IN what was probably intended to reassure the reader that the glamorous life is in reality no better than her own, an article in a recent issue of *Dépêche Mode* described the fashion editor's workaday travails: the arduous international air travel with seven suitcases at a time when porters have been replaced by those little self-service carts, the sallow pallor brought about by long hours spent in pitch-dark tents looking at clothes, the scramble for a table at Bice—that kind of thing. A woman I met in Paris at a dinner party, a lawyer, had read this article in her dentist's waiting room, and when I told her what I do for a living she looked at me with respect. Having just come through a nasty scrimmage with a French customs official over the eight pairs of shoes I'd bought on a binge in Italy, I could assure her that the lot of a fashion editor is very hard indeed. She seemed satisfied.

As it happens, during the latest rounds of collections one of the most popular topics of conversation between shows was how to alleviate the chronic stress that has crept into the lives of those few thousand people who four times a year (six if you count the men's collections) find themselves dutifully flying to Milan, to London, to Paris, to New York, and, occasionally, to cities off this beaten path (Madrid, Düsseldorf, L.A., Tokyo) in the effort to keep up with the new clothes produced every season; I figure that in the course of an ordinary year the average fashion editor watches some twenty-eight thousand outfits parade by. This season, fashion editors wearing sunglasses to hide the dark circles under their eyes compared the efficacy of various relaxation techniques—aromatherapy, biofeedback, Shiatsu. A woman sitting behind me at a show in Paris told the man next to her about a soothing videocassette she takes with her when she travels, for use on the hotel-room VCR: a long-playing tape that transforms the TV into an aquarium—six hours of fish swimming across the screen.

Every once in a while, usually when somebody asks me, with genuine interest, what colors "they"—meaning the designers—are showing for next season, or whether some trend or other is going to continue, it occurs to me that the majority of the people I meet who are sick and tired of fashion are fashion people themselves. These people—the editors, the buyers, the publicists, the models, the stylists, the photographers, and the designers—in some ways have more in common with one another than with the people back home. They like to think of themselves as citizens of the world, but what they are is citizens of fashion.

Now that the business of fashion has reached such unwieldy proportions, these people are in a perpetual burned-out state, perpetually jaded, and yet they're perpetually expectant, hoping for some new excitement—excitement being fashion's stock-in-trade. Sometimes the need for new excitement becomes so overwhelming that they will whip some up where none exists. But more often they zero in on what's already under way in some other sector of the culture—the art world, pop music, the movies, technology, ecology, religion. In London, the fall collections were enlivened by a street-wise, rap-music style inspired by the far-reaching success of groups like Soul II Soul—a style that reached its ironic zenith in Nick Coleman's collection of windbreakers and racing-striped track suits and bikers' shorts in synthetic colors, which mostly looked like discount-store separates with attitude. Nike high-tops, unlaced at the ankle, were the shoes of choice. In place of a show, Rifat Ozbek offered a video of his elegant collection—New Age hip-hop sportswear presented in a landscape from another planet and culminating in a stretch bodysuit covered in fish-scale sequins that made their way, from shoulder to ankle, through all the colors of the spectrum. The following week, in Paris, Katherine Hamnett presented more clothes that give inner-city fashion the haute-couture treatment. All over London, parkas and pullovers now come complete with drawstring hoods. An American journalist surveying a cocktail party for Jasper Conran, where Reeboks and zippered jersey jackets with hoods were the order of the evening, remarked, "I feel like I'm in a roomful of messengers."



"Excuse me. I'm all through with this plastic-foam coffee cup, so if no one wants it or has any objection I guess I'll just throw it away."

THERE was nothing particularly worse or less remarkable or more dispiriting about this season than about any other in recent memory. If anything, there was a kind of free-floating optimism in the air. And it's worth noting, if only for the record, that Gianni Versace presented his best collection in years—one that was disciplined and consistent—and that Karl Lagerfeld showed what stands in my mind as his finest Chanel collection to date, mercifully free from the kitschy Coco memorabilia that has cluttered up the clothes in the past, and packed solid with ideas in the spirit of Chanel herself (one example: down-filled parkas of black silk taffeta, which are cut like the classic cardigan jacket and banded in black satin). Christian Lacroix is beginning to look like a better accessories designer than dressmaker (there's no shame in that unless, of course, you've been cracked up to be a great dressmaker, as he has been). But after a while this business of registering the designers' ups and downs becomes an exercise in scorekeeping. Krizia, better than usual. Montana, good. Dolce & Gabbana, not so hot. So what?

What, exactly, is it we're looking for, and why is it that every season we feel as if fashion were somehow falling short of our expectations? When, sometime in the early seventies, we rewrote the collective dress code and repealed the obligation to conform, we lost some of the power to reinvent ourselves in the bargain. If anything goes—if a woman can wear any color, any hemline, any style at any time—then nothing ever looks new. A fashion magazine could tell its readers to "think pink" one season, because they'd been thinking navy blue or yellow or aqua the season before, and suddenly pink looked fresh again. But with no consensus to react against, designers have a harder time than ever coming up with a direction. No wonder fashion doesn't loom as large as it used to in the average person's everyday life. No wonder designers and editors and art directors and advertising copywriters are at a loss to know how to make fashion seem important once again.

For the paid-up members of a consumer society, every purchase is a vote: we get out of bed in the morning and vote for a certain kind of cereal, a certain means of transportation to work, a certain newspaper, a certain ballpoint pen, a certain restaurant for dinner. What the citizens of the fashion community like—the clothes they wear and the magazines they read and the music they listen to—is not significant in and of itself. (Contrary to what a lot of people think, good taste is not a prerequisite for a successful career in fashion.) To the extent that today's fashion editors have become celebrities, it is largely because of personality cults invented by P.R. people, and not because of anything extraordinary, or even especially interesting, about their outlook on the world. Paid to shop for a living, they acquire inadvertently or cultivate deliberately an air of connoisseurship: they wear jewelry by Chanel or, lately, Christian Lacroix; shoes by Manolo Blahnik; stockings by Pierre Mantoux; Ray-Bans. They read Italian *Vogue*. If these selections are illuminating, it's for their near-unanimity at a time when fashion as it's presented on the runways seems so disparate and arbitrary.

NOT long ago, during the collections in Paris, I was sitting in a café next to the pay phone, and I overheard a woman who was clutching a notebook and a stack of invitations for that afternoon's shows as she made arrangements to meet someone for dinner. "I'll be the one in black, with the Prada bag," she said—a description that fitted any one of about fifteen hundred women in town that week.

Fratelli Prada, which has been a manufacturer of leather goods and *oggetti di lusso*—luxury objects—since 1913, has lately become a favorite stop of the people who travel the fashion circuit. Twice a year, they arrive in Milan for the Italian shows, descend on the two Prada boutiques, and, credit cards in hand, clean them out. The original store, in the heart of the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele—a nineteenth-century glass-roofed shopping mall—is described in a 1986 booklet about the company's history as a "shrine of shopping culture." Its solid-mahogany-and-brass fittings, ordered from London by Mario Prada, the founder, reflect the long-standing Milanese fascination with things in the English style. (Today, Prada sells a range of leather-bound agendas and pocket-size pads with titles like "SKI NOTES" embossed in gold on the front, and small address books with index tabs for blondes, brunettes, and redheads—all of which are made by Smythson's, the Bond Street stationers.) The other Prada boutique in Milan, on the modish Via della Spiga, dates from 1985, by which time the business had passed into the hands of Mario Prada's granddaughter Miuccia. It is Miuccia who has brought Prada from the store that once counted the Italian royal family among its clients to the store that it is

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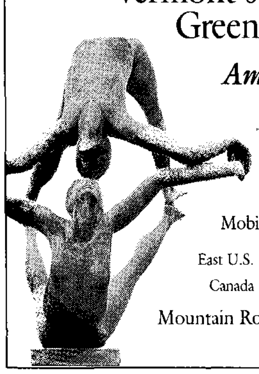

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Town & Country Mag.
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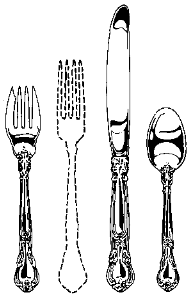

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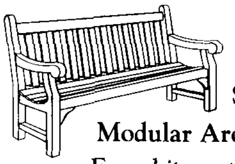

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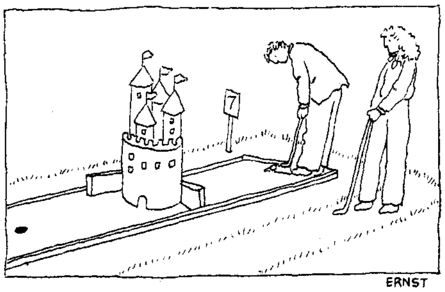
now. She took charge in 1978, at the age of twenty-eight, after earning a doctorate in political science and then spending five years studying mime at the Piccolo Teatro, in preparation for an acting career. Miuccia says that initially she resisted the notion of joining the family firm, because she thought fashion was "too typically feminine," and she wanted to do something "more important." That was, of course, at a time when thinking women were rejecting fashion wholesale. Her attitude, Miuccia says, "was part of that moment, and the moment is past now," and she adds, "Now it is no more a problem to do feminine work. Now to do feminine work is right."

When Miuccia is asked to put the Prada style into words, she talks about her determination to make what she calls "a product." Not all the bags and shoes and clothes that Prada makes qualify as "products" in her mind, but the ones that do are the heart of the company's new image. "Sometimes I do a bag that is very nice, very fancy, beautiful, but it is not a product—it is just a beautiful piece," she explains. "I want always to mix the industrial way of doing things—because we are in the nineteen-nineties—with the *patrimonio* of the past, with the artisanal tradition." Prada's raincoat in silk faille, from the first collection, qualified as a "product" because, she says, "it joined the aura of the haute couture"—imparted by the fabric—"with a modern way of sewing," thereby forming "a link between the luxury and tradition of the past and the industrial techniques and the modern outlook of the present."

Prada's nylon bags are perhaps the company's best example of what Miuccia means. In sturdy, industrial-weight woven nylon, and in a staggering array of colors and shapes and sizes, they are sometimes crazy-quilted, like Chanel gone awry, sometimes beaded or hand-embroidered, sometimes trimmed with leather or crocodile. The balance—the light, flexible synthetic material and the precious way it's handled—is what Miuccia is trying to achieve in all the store's merchandise; when the balance is right, she believes, the customer responds. Eventually. When Prada first introduced nylon bags, she recalls, nobody wanted to buy them. These were upstart bags: by their design they demanded to be taken seriously, but they were made of a material that, according to most people's taste at the time, undermined their credibility. Real bags, the sort of bags people were proud to carry, came in leather or crocodile or silk, not nylon.

In keeping with its tradition, Prada has continued to make leather goods: suède bags trimmed with passementerie and silk tassels; leather wallets embossed with Constructivist motifs; jewelry rolls in grained calf lined with suède; boxy pigskin suitcases; key rings with leather medallions. Five years ago, Miuccia's assistants persuaded her to introduce a line of shoes pitched halfway between classic and funky—handsome spectator oxfords, embroidered and jewelled suède slippers, wing tips with two straps across the instep and a sturdy, gracefully curved medium heel. Four seasons ago, her assistants once again persuaded her to branch out, this time into ready-to-wear, which at first was sold only upstairs at the Via della Spiga store, with no signs pointing the way—as if the company weren't yet sure that it wanted to commit itself to clothes. Now that the clothes have proved to be a success, however, the upstairs has been remodelled and the shop in the Galleria has opened a new room to house them. Miuccia acknowledges that, as is often the case with something new in fashion, the ready-to-wear has been a bigger hit with the press than with the buyers—they move more cautiously and often wait for the fashion magazines to create a demand. Yet, for all the enthusiasm that has greeted Prada's collections, their coverage in the fashion press has been fairly slight. (The advertising director of a fashion magazine recently told me that the editors where she works are so crazy about everything Prada does that each season she is obliged to remind them that Prada doesn't take out enough pages of advertising to justify devoting a lot of space to it in the magazine.)

The five ready-to-wear collections so far have included a shirt with a collar edged in tiny seashells; a miniskirt that is a meshwork of tubular and round and oval beechwood beads strung on elastic, and is shown over tights; a pair of wide-leg organdie trousers banded with a fringe of rooster feathers, like hula hoops, around the calves; and, for fall, a high-collared trapeze dress in a loosely woven charcoal-gray-and-ochre gabardine, with a lead-colored metal shawl, and an ankle-length dark-brown heavy silk taffeta evening coat belted in front, loose in back. A reporter looking at these clothes is struck by two things. First, that there are so many dresses, particularly for summer—not Spandex second skins or drapy numbers for dinner but everyday dresses for a woman to wear as she goes about her life. (The only other designer who understands just how comfortable a dress can be is Sybilla.) Second, that these are not clothes preoccupied with sex appeal. It's not hard to imagine a woman looking sexy in them, but the appeal would come from something in her nature which she brings to the clothes, not something the clothes bring to her. Most Prada clothing is simple without being plain or (that arty euphemism) "minimalist." It inhabits a world apart from the one in which the fashion volume has been pumped up so loud that we can't hear ourselves think; in which Steven Meisel's work for Italian *Vogue*, particularly his bump-and-grind pictures of Linda Evangelista, has set off a chain reaction of raw-sex fashion images; in which a model who looks like Brigitte Bardot reincarnate has replaced the patrician Inès de la Fressange as the embodiment of the Chanel style. Recent developments like these baffle Miuccia. She says that she likes sexy clothes but that a lot of what she sees these days she finds merely vulgar, and much of that vulgarity doesn't to her mind qualify as fashion, because it breaks no new ground—because it's so retro.



At any given moment, fashion is a reliable barometer of our feelings about the past and the future. In the New Look, to take the most obvious example, we can read an optimistic eagerness to move forward, a compelling desire to forget the horrors of the war; in the current nostalgia for the sixties and seventies we can sense a hanging back from the brink of nuclear war, AIDS, and the earth's destruction. Through fashion, we position ourselves somewhere between tomorrow and yesteray, embracing the future or keeping it t bay.

In the beginning, Miuccia took inspiration for new designs from some of he things Prada had offered under her randfather, but five years ago she topped looking to the archives for deas. Unlike Hermès and Louis uitton, other old and distinguished eather-goods houses that have in reent years made a strong comeback, rada doesn't reproduce any of its old lesigns: no bags made for Grace Kelly r scarves commemorating Queen lizabeth's visit, no trunks with lots of ittle drawers, each one to hold a single hoe. Prada's "classics" are best-sellers o more than a few years old. Miuccia ays flatly that if the day comes when Prada's image begins to suffer because hese things have been so popular, or when these things no longer keep pace with what Prada stands for, they will e discontinued. She is rigorously future-minded—not by nature, it appears, but by conviction. In conversation she gives the impression of a woman who could easily—effortlessly—lapse into the designs of the past if it weren't for her own iron resolve, her constant vigilance, and, ultimately, her restlessness. "For my mother, being elegant was dressing in the same color, in the same style all your life," she recalls. "According to that idea, I am not elegant at all."

I ask her how her mother feels about what Prada has become under her direction.

She laughs. "She says that the things are not well made, that the fabrics are not as good, that everything was much better in her time."

—HOLLY BRUBACH

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DEPT. OF UNBRIDLED INFLATION

[*From the Corvallis* (*Ore.*) *Gazette-Times*]

Theft—of $500 cash from room 112 at Clark Meat Laboratory at Oregon State University. Value: $200.

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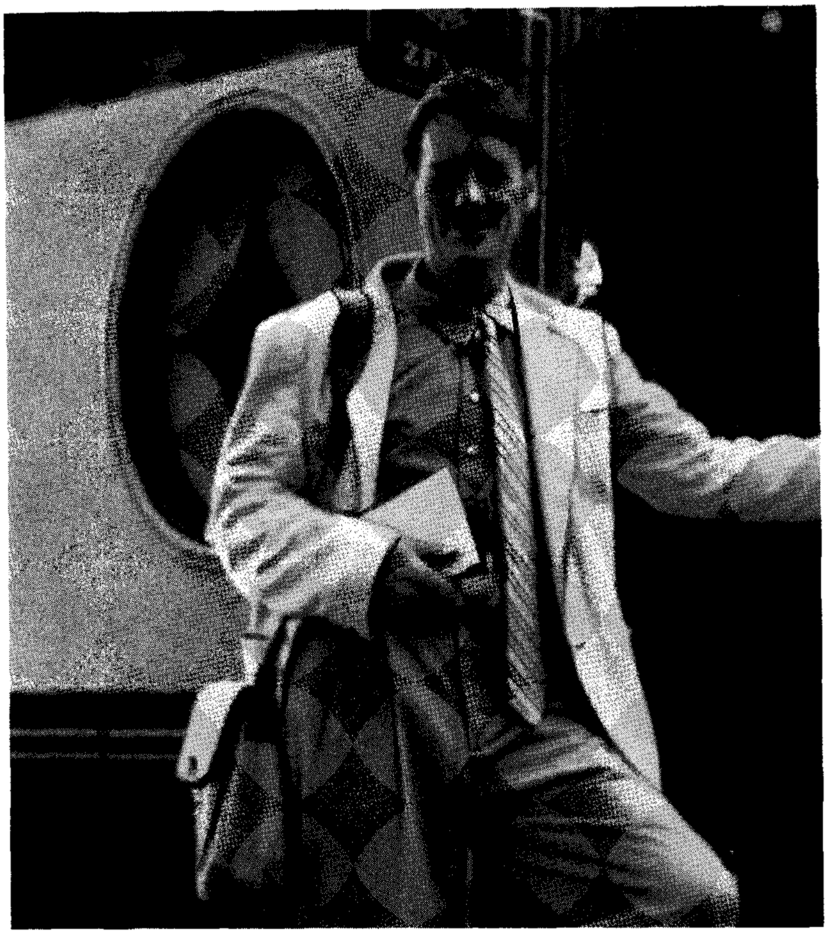
The fourth ingredient is community. We are coming to understand in America again that community is a sum that is greater than the parts. The idea, as I say, most crippling to public and private schools is the opposite: namely, that community equals the sum of the parts, or what the parts say the sum is, thus what the parts are; and, therefore, should the parts not be in agreement, the parts at the expense of the sum, and even the other parts.—*Jerry Van Voorhis, Rector, in the alumnae magazine of Chatham Hall, in Chatham, Va.*

Or, to sum up . . .



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A CRITIC AT LARGE

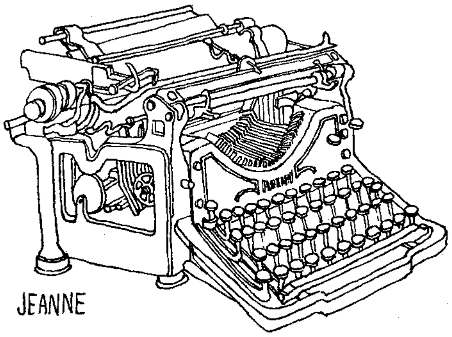
THE ESSENCE OF THE LANDSCAPE

FOR François Truffaut it was "the film of films." Another, very different filmmaker, Alain Resnais, says his first viewing of it was "the single most overwhelming experience I have ever had in the cinema." But when Jean Renoir's "The Rules of the Game" ("La Règle du Jeu"), a dramatic comedy about a week-long party at a château in the Sologne, was first shown to the public—on July 7, 1939, at the Colisée and Aubert cinemas, in Paris—the reaction wasn't quite so enthusiastic. According to Renoir, one opening-night spectator at the Colisée put a match to his newspaper "with the obvious intention of setting fire to the auditorium"; others "wanted to smash the seats." Even a friend of Renoir's, the director René Clair, felt compelled to ask him, "In fact, what, exactly, was it you wished to do?" (The depressed filmmaker replied, "I don't know—I no longer know.")

Not an auspicious beginning for "the film of films," and things didn't get better any time soon. The reviews in the most important papers were abusive (the film got good notices in some smaller publications, though), the public mostly stayed home, and Renoir and his editor hacked away at the movie in the hope of averting financial disaster: "The Rules of the Game," which had already been cut for its première, at the urging of its nervous distributor, from a hundred and seven minutes to ninety-seven, dwindled to ninety minutes, then eighty-five. It's as if the film had begun to disappear the moment Renoir stopped shooting. Three weeks after that clamorous first screening at the Colisée, "The Rules of the Game"—what remained of it—was pulled from distribution, and it was rarely seen in the years that followed, because it was banned at various times by both the Vichy government and the occupying Germans. And in 1942 Allied bombers wiped out the G.M. Film Laboratories at Boulogne-sur-Seine, destroying the only negative of the complete, hundred-and-seven-minute version. By then, Renoir himself had disappeared. He left for America in 1940; "The Rules of the Game" was the last movie he made in France until 1954.

Now, at the end of the movie's fiftieth-anniversary year, July 7, 1939, has for us the aura of a special day, an important occasion in film history; but the date commemorates a catastrophe, not a triumph. In 1939, no one had really seen the movie we now know as "The Rules of the Game," and those few who attended screenings of the incomplete versions watched them through a haze of doubt, fear, and anxiety: France was on the verge of war (it had begun to mobilize in March, soon after Renoir started filming), and not many people were in the mood for a devastating analysis of the society they would have to fight to defend. To make matters worse, the first public showing of the film was preceded by a long patriotic documentary. And, in any event, "The Rules of the Game" was like nothing anyone had ever seen in a movie theatre before. No one—not Renoir himself, in his twenty-two previous films—had ever used the medium to express such a dense, complex vision of life; had ever challenged his audience with so rich an assortment of characters and so intricate and subtle a play of ideas; or had ever deployed the resources of film technique with such abandon and command. The movie was, even in its diminished state, just too much for the audiences of the time—and the cuts probably made it even more confusing.

It's still a difficult film, not because there's anything obscure or abstract about it—dramatically, it is always strong and lucid—but because it never lets us rest, never allows us the comfort of knowing that we're responding "correctly." A single scene in "The Rules of the Game" gives us more for our senses, emotions, and intellect than most whole movies do, yet Renoir never tells us what to feel or think, or even what to see and hear: the images are composed with extreme depth; the camera is always moving, reframing the action; and the soundtrack is crowded with voices and natural sounds. There isn't a true protagonist, either: Renoir, a genuine democrat, encourages us to pay attention to a dozen or so characters, from every class of French society, and to find them all equally interesting. Renoir's style couldn't be less coercive —which means that we can't just sit there passively. Truffaut wrote in 1967, after countless viewings, "We look at this movie with a strong feeling of complicity; I mean that, instead of seeing a finished product handed to us to satisfy our curiosity, we feel we are there as the film is made, we almost think that we can see Renoir organize the whole as we watch the film projected." "The Rules of the Game," the story of a group of people caught in the machinery of European culture, is a movie about freedom. The making of the film was a loose, intuitive, collaborative process (it was, Renoir said, the most improvised of his movies), and the director was clearly offering the same freedom to his audience that he had extended to his cast and crew; he couldn't imagine that anyone wouldn't want it.



OBVIOUSLY, "The Rules of the Game" wasn't what the French public wanted in the anxious days before the war. And, despite the movie's current status as an official classic of world cinema, no one in this country threw any parties for its fiftieth birthday. Over and over last year, we were told by virtually everyone in the American "entertainment news" media that 1939 was the best year in the history of the movies, a conclusion based on a handful of Hollywood pictures that had remained audience favorites for five decades: "Stagecoach," "Wuthering Heights," "Gunga Din," "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," "Young Mr. Lincoln," "The Wizard of Oz," and, preëminently, "Gone with the Wind." In the fan-historians' celebrations of the way things used to be, there's no mention of "The Rules of the Game." In a way, the omission seems appropriite. The classic Hollywood films of 1939 are all, in varying degrees, products of a system rather than expressions of individual sensibilities: to cite those movies as the collective high point of movie history is to accept a limited conception of the nature of the art.

As richly enjoyable as "Gone with the Wind" is, it is also, intentionally, impersonal—a triumph of planning and traditional, anonymous studio craftsmanship. Famously, it's a producer's film: the director whose name is on the picture—Victor Fleming, a versatile, reliable type—wasn't even around when shooting started (he was the second man in, after George Cukor was fired by David O. Selznick); and the movie had nearly as many writers as it had extras. "Gone with the Wind" is a cathedral—a humble monument to the unseen, all-powerful Architect, the Hollywood studio—and for most of us it's a very comforting place to retreat to. Whether we attend the full four-hour service or just drop in for a few minutes of meditation, we know we'll walk out reassured of American movies' eternal verities: the narrative conventions, the fine production values, the iconlike stars—the articles of faith that we grew up with, and know almost better than we know ourselves.

"The Rules of the Game" has an altogether different effect. It glories in all that's variable, unplanned, unsystematic; no matter how many times you've seen it, each new viewing provokes fresh, unfamiliar responses. No less than "Gone with the Wind" and the other certified miracle movies of 1939, "The Rules of the Game" represents the culmination of great traditions, but Renoir's film feels like a turning point, not an end point. The American movies that came out on the eve of the Second World War set a kind of standard, and they function now as a reproach: the studio system that produced those strong, confident popular entertainments hasn't worked as well since. (When Selznick himself tried to equal "Gone with the Wind," only seven years later, what he came up with was "Duel in the Sun.") The Hollywood system of moviemaking was able—because it *is* a system—to perfect itself in the prewar years, to achieve an ideal form; from then on, the product could be new but not (except technically) improved.

"My daddy is the one with the longest ponytail."

• •

When we watch the studio pictures of fifty years ago, time seems to stop. If we accept the notion of a true golden age of movies, the history of the art turns static, as unalterable as Scripture: the revelation of absolute truth has a tendency to discourage the development and free exploration of ideas. (Let's not forget that even in the thirties and forties there were people for whom the *silent* cinema represented the ultimate truth, the never-to-be-recaptured peak of pure film art.) We don't watch "The Rules of the Game" that way. It never presents itself as ideal or unsurpassable; it expands our ideas of what movies can be, and enriches our sense of what they have been, both before and after it. We can't see Renoir's film today without seeing in it as well the shadows of the artists it has inspired: De Sica and Rossellini, Satyajit Ray, Truffaut, the early Godard, Robert Altman, the Visconti of "The Leopard," and even, in one beautiful film ("Smiles of a Summer Night"), Ingmar Bergman. "The Rules of the Game" doesn't stand out like a monument. It's the image, and the embodiment, of a profound sense of continuity; whenever we see it, it seems somehow to have inserted itself in the flow of history—to have matched exactly the rhythm of our lives. "The Rules of the Game" is one of the rare movies that will always look as if they had been made just yesterday. We can't watch it with they-don't-make-'em-like-they-used-to nostalgia, because no one but Renoir made them like that even then. This movie could never have fitted comfortably into the film-history canon of ruined masterpieces, alongside "Greed" and "The Magnificent Ambersons." The work of flamboyant, obsessive artists like Stroheim and Welles can retain its force even in fragments, in brilliant individual sequences, but the natural, unobtrusive flow of Renoir's images can't be interrupted without violating something essential. (Among his thirties films, the only ones that refuse to come to life are those which remain incomplete: his 1934 "Madame Bovary," cut from over three hours to just two; and the 1932 "La Nuit du Carrefour," three reels of which were lost before editing.)

WHAT is worth celebrating now, in this generally dispiriting time for movies, is that "The Rules of the Game" has survived. The vision that Jean Renoir committed to film between February and May of 1939 was finally, almost miraculously, restored twenty years after the catastrophe of its première, and the audience was at last ready for it. In 1958, the movie's new distributors, Jean Gaborit and Jacques Maréchal, discovered that not all had been lost in the bombing of the G.M. Laboratories: there remained some two hundred cans of film which contained bits and pieces of "The Rules of the Game." Under Renoir's supervision, Gaborit and Jacques Durand began to assemble the footage, and when they were finished they had something very close to the movie he had actually made—the one he had originally intended to unveil at the 1939 World's Fair in New York.

This hundred-and-six-minute patchwork version (several scenes had to be printed from positives, because no negatives of them existed, and one minute-long sequence couldn't be located in any form) had its première at the Venice Film Festival on August 31, 1959, and the only fire this time was in the minds and hearts of the grateful spectators. Renoir was then sixty-four years old, and past his peak as an artist (he made only two more pictures before his death, in 1979), but the restoration of "The Rules of the Game" was more than a vindication for an old man, or even a delayed fulfillment of the younger man's dream. It must have seemed to the fortunate audience as if a twenty-year gap in movie history had suddenly closed up—as if a rip in time had been repaired.

It wouldn't be strictly accurate to claim that the renovation of "The Rules of the Game" was the impetus for the revolution in French filmmaking that became known as the New Wave: by the autumn of 1959, many of those young *cinéastes* had shot their first films, and Renoir was already, in varying degrees, the spirit presiding over them. There was, after all, more than enough in the rest of his work to draw inspiration from. He had made great films before 1939 ("Boudu Saved from Drowning," "A Day in the Country," "The Crime of Monsieur Lange," "Grand Illusion"), and he made them after ("The River" and "The Golden Coach"); even his lesser movies were vibrant and energetic—evidence of a complex moviemaking intelligence.

When Renoir began shooting "The Rules of the Game," he had been making movies for fifteen years—a career he stumbled on, and then pursued with the innocent passion of an amateur. Born in 1894, the son of the Impressionist painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir, he was, by his own account, a rather aimless young man. After serving in the First World War (he was wounded), he returned to his father's house and contented himself with dabbling in various arts; as he approached thirty, he had more or less settled on pottery as his métier. But one last dilettantish impulse intervened. He and his young wife, Catherine Hessling, were avid moviegoers, and Renoir thought that Catherine was every bit as beautiful as Gloria Swanson or Mary Pickford. He later wrote, "I set foot in the world of the cinema only in order to make my wife a star, intending, once this was done, to return to my pottery studio." The film he wrote and produced, "Catherine," was directed by Albert Dieudonné (who would later play the title role in Abel Gance's "Napoléon"), and it was, Renoir said, "a total failure." (It remained unreleased for three years.) But Renoir was hooked, and decided to try again, this time directing his wife himself: the result, "La Fille de l'Eau" (1925), was the real start of his filmmaking life. He made seven more silent movies, and never quite managed to turn Catherine Hessling into a star. The marriage fell apart at the beginning of the thirties, but Renoir kept on making films, and started to hit his stride around the time sound was coming in. "La Chienne" (1931), with Michel Simon, was his first commercial success, and his first great film. His reputation grew throughout the thirties. By 1935, he was France's best filmmaker. (René Clair and Abel Gance had made their most memorable pictures in the silent era, and Jean Vigo died in 1934—at the age of twenty-nine—after making his two extraordinary movies, "Zero for Conduct" and "L'Atalante.") And by 1937 he was even its most respected: his classic anti-war movie, "Grand Illusion," was a huge international hit (except in Germany and Italy, where—not surprisingly—it was banned). Two years later, the scandalous failure of "The Rules of the Game" destroyed his reputation in a stroke, and nearly broke his spirit; it left him, he wrote, "so depressed . . . that I resolved either to give up the cinema or to leave France."

After the war, Renoir slowly became—in absentia—an important figure in French film again, his influence having been kept alive by the critic André Bazin. Renoir's work in the thirties was the touchstone of the sophisticated film aesthetic that Bazin passed on to the young critics who wrote for his new magazine, *Cahiers du Cinéma:* François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Maurice Schérer (better known as Eric Rohmer), Claude Chabrol, Jacques Rivette. The support of Bazin and his protégés probably encouraged Renoir to try making films in his native country once more. When "French Cancan" and "Eléna et les Hommes" were released, in the mid-fifties, the *Cahiers* writers were their most vigorous champions. By the time "The Rules of the Game" was reborn in Venice, there was, perhaps for the first time, an audience that was ready, and eager, to learn from it. Although Bazin died in 1958, before the restoration was complete (and before he could finish his book on Renoir), he was the crucial link between Renoir and succeeding generations of filmmakers. His teachings encouraged the continuity of what was best in movies, and stimulated his younger colleagues to see and take advantage of the remarkable liberation that Renoir's thirties films proposed—to carry on the explorations that had stopped abruptly on the terrible night of the première of "The Rules of the Game." Renoir dedicated the version unveiled in 1959 to the memory of Bazin.

In any event, the mutilated "Rules of the Game" was probably more impressive to aspiring filmmakers than to anyone else—they were better equipped to understand the impulse behind Renoir's technical innovations, to appreciate the audacious beauty of his experiments with film form. What no one could have seen before Venice was that "The Rules of the Game" wasn't just a brave attempt, a series of provocative suggestions, a radical but not quite articulate manifesto of cinematic freedom. The integral version showed that all Renoir's gambles had paid off: that in movies the willingness to remain open to chance—the vagaries of the weather, the stray discoveries of improvising actors, the flickering intuitions of correspondence between the great art of the past and the wholly new forms of xpression demanded by a shifting, unertain present—could sometimes uncover a deeper kind of order, make us hear harmonies in what had once eemed only noise.

An achieved masterpiece is a different sort of inspiration from a failed one: t gives other artists something to aim for, provides them with the confidence (which might otherwise be hard to sustain) that everything is possible. Truffaut believed that “along with Citizen Kane,’ ‘La Règle du Jeu’ is certainly the film that sparked the careers of the greatest number of directors.” And Resnais reported that after seeing the movie for the first time “all my ideas about the cinema had been challenged.” He added, “Since then, of course, I’ve seen it at least fifteen times—like most filmmakers of my generation.” For these filmmakers “The Rules of the Game” was a *useful* classic, just the movie they needed. Physically, there’s no more restoration to be done, but the fiftieth anniversary of “The Rules of the Game” gives us an occasion for renewing our acquaintance with this great film, for learning to use it again. We’ve never needed it more.

RENOIR was a master of taking what he needed from the art he loved. In his autobiography, “My Life and My Films,” he begins the chapter on “The Rules of the Game” this way: “You spend an evening listening to records and the result is a film. I cannot say that it was French Baroque music that inspired me to make ‘La Règle du Jeu,’ but certainly it played a part in making me wish to film the sort of people who danced to that music. I based my thought on it only at the beginning. . . . I was entering a period of my life when my daily companions were Couperin, Rameau, and every composer from Lulli to Grétry. By degrees my idea took shape and the subject became simplified, and after a few days, while I lived to Baroque rhythms, it became more and more clearly defined.” None of the music he cites actually wound up in the film—he used Mozart and Monsigny instead—but his recollection is plausible: there’s a lot of this music on the soundtrack of Renoir’s film about the Revolution, “La Marseillaise” (which was finished just a few months before he began writing the scenario of “The Rules of the Game”), and the “Baroque rhythms” are still very evident in the final product.

Renoir often spoke, too, of literary and theatrical sources for the style of “The Rules of the Game.” In a 1966 television interview, he said, “I looked for inspiration in Beaumarchais, in Marivaux, in the classical authors, in comedy,” and he frequently acknowledged the importance to him of Alfred de Musset’s “Les Caprices de Marianne,” a tragic farce, written in 1833, in which a young man hopelessly in love with a married woman is killed in a garden because he has been mistaken for someone else. Something like this happens at the end of “The Rules of the Game,” and the unlucky hero of Musset’s play, like his counterpart in Renoir’s film, has a confidant named Octave, but Renoir took little else from the classical source, and he never thought of his film as an adaptation. His reading and rereading of classical texts, like his listening to Baroque music, was essentially a matter of putting himself in a specific frame of mind, of immersing himself in a particular form of thinking and feeling about the world. “My ambition,” he once said, “was to find again a certain elegance, a certain grace, a certain rhythm which is typical of the eighteenth century.” What he cared about, even before he knew what his story was going to be, was “the classical spirit, which is a spirit in which one keeps things on the inside rather than show them on the outside”—a spirit that he felt was “apparently extremely difficult to understand for a public that has been submerged in romantic tears for a hundred years.”

The film that immediately preceded “The Rules of the Game” wasn’t at all in the classical spirit. It was an adaptation of Zola’s novel “La Bête Humaine,” with the very popular Jean Gabin as its star, and it was one of Renoir’s greatest commercial successes. (It opened in December, 1938, and was still playing when Renoir began shooting “The Rules of the Game,” almost three months later.) Watching the movie today, we can see that the claustrophobic, fatalistic material doesn’t really suit the director’s temperament. His adaptation isn’t slavish, but in trying to be faithful to Zola’s spirit he’s as trapped as Jacques Lantier, the novel’s unfortunate hero. Lantier, a railroad engineer (and, like many Zola protagonists, the inheritor of some powerfully

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bad genes), kills his mistress in a spasm of rage and commits suicide to atone for his crime. Two of Renoir's best movies, "La Chienne" and "The Crime of Monsieur Lange," also have heroes who are murderers, but the director can't bring himself to punish them: to our great satisfaction, both of those sympathetic killers are allowed to escape. Lantier's fate is determined, inexorable, as rigidly laid out as the tracks his engine runs on. (It's also determined to some extent by the presence of Gabin, who achieved stardom by dying splendidly in doomed-love poetic melodramas like "Quai des Brumes.") Renoir's open style comes close to subverting Zola's ideas: the long scenes of Lantier driving his locomotive, which should probably give us a sense of the hero's entrapment by the Machine or Fate or History, or whatever, are instead peculiarly exhilarating.

Years later, Renoir said, "I had wanted to make 'The Rules of the Game' for a long time, but that desire became more distinct while I was shooting 'La Bête Humaine.' . . . Working on that scenario made me want to change course, and perhaps to escape naturalism completely." And in order to escape other, more practical sorts of constraints he formed his own production company. In an interview he gave in January, 1939, Renoir spoke exuberantly about his new organization, La Nouvelle Édition Française: "The N.E.F.—that's what I call my production company—is directed by old friends." Actually, they were three friends—André Zwobada, Camille François, and Olivier Billiou—and the director's brother Claude. "The five of us get along like the five fingers of a hand," Renoir went on. "I will make two films a year, and I'll be able to keep my crew: de Bretagne, the sound engineer; Bachelet, the cameraman; Lourié, the designer; and the others." The first project of this merry band, he announced, would be "The Rules of the Game." Neither the screenplay nor the cast was yet complete, but he knew what he wanted the film to be: "a precise description of the bourgeois of our age." Later, puzzled and chastened by the public's response to the film, Renoir affected a certain modesty in speaking of his ambitions for "The Rules of the Game," and expressed astonishment that this "pleasant" film, with its "charming story," could arouse such strong feelings. But it's clear that his own feelings were running pretty high at the time he made it. He was breaking away from a set of aesthetic principles he had become uncomfortable with, declaring his independence from the French film industry, gathering his dearest friends and most respected colleagues into an almost utopian experiment in communal filmmaking, paying homage to the art and literature he felt closest to, and attempting to portray the true nature of European culture at the moment of its most profound unease—the moment when it was about to be transformed forever.

The circumstances and the impulses that combined to produce "The Rules of the Game" were perhaps so strong, so deep, and so complex that even its author wasn't fully conscious of everything the film meant to him (and would later mean to us). Yet he obviously had more than an inkling that he was onto something. The movie was, for its time, very expensive to make, and Renoir was willing to gamble the future of his new company on it. He was willing, too, to expose himself onscreen in a central role, to let the audience have a good, long look at him, whatever the consequences. "The Rules of the Game" represents an extraordinary gesture of faith; it tests all that Renoir values as an artist and as a man.

IN February, 1939, Renoir took his cast and crew to the Sologne, a marshy region (not far to the south of Paris) known for excellent hunting. The story he had come up with, to satisfy his desires to express the classical spirit and to describe precisely the bourgeois of his age, was set mainly on a large country estate belonging to the Marquis de la Chesnaye, who has invited several of his friends for an extended houseparty. The planned entertainment includes a musical revue, endless card games, the unveiling of a spectacular mechanical toy (the Marquis is a passionate collector of automatons), and a hunt. The unplanned entertainment is farce—the working out of a variety of amorous intrigues involving the host, his guests, and the servants. The catalyst of all the romantic confusion is a young pilot named André Jurieu, who, as the film begins, has just completed a solo transatlantic flight, landing in Paris to a hero's welcome. On being accosted by a radio interviewer as he walks across the tarmac, Jurieu blurts out, for the nation to hear, that his great feat means nothing to him: "I undertook this exploit because of a woman. She isn't even here waiting for me." The woman, as everyone in Paris seems to know, is Christine, the wife of the Marquis. Christine reassures her husband (truthfully) that there has never been anything but warm friendship between her and the aviator; La Chesnaye is so moved by her fidelity that he decides to break with his longtime mistress, Geneviève. ("My darling, yesterday evening, quite suddenly, I decided to be worthy of my wife.") Jurieu, almost suicidal with disappointment, begs his friend Octave to speak with Christine, and Octave, who has known her since she was a little girl, persuades her to invite the lovesick hero to the Marquis's country house, La Colinière (in reality, the Château de la Ferté-Saint-Aubin). Christine and her husband are reluctant, of course. But she's genuinely fond of Jurieu, and feels guilty for having been, however innocently, the cause of his misery. La Chesnaye wants to please his wife, and his image of himself is of someone who believes in freedom, who is "against barriers . . . against walls"; and, besides, everyone involved "has class" (as one of the Marquis's guests later pronounces)—people like them know how to handle awkward situations.

Everything in the first few minutes of the film is laid out with a splendid, classical economy. (According to most sources, these expository passages were the only part of the film's scenario which was finished when shooting began.) Yet we barely notice how carefully the plot is being set in motion; nothing feels obligatory or purely formal. The camera moves fluidly through the beautiful set (designed by Eugène Lourié) of La Chesnaye's Paris apartment, and the actors seem to be gliding through their scenes with equal ease. There's an almost insolent grace in these passages: Renoir and his company have the nerve to play this

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Comédie Française material as if nothng could be more natural. It goes own as easily as the Mozart we hear over the opening credits. Every line, very gesture looks as if it had been nvented on the spot. And more than one probably was. The screenplay redit for the film reads, "Jean Renoir, with the collaboration of Karl Koch, Camille François . . . and the actors." 'I improvised a lot," Renoir said in an nterview. "The actors are also the authors of a film, and when you're in heir presence they give you reactions you couldn't have foreseen; these reacions are often good, and you'd be crazy not to take advantage of them. . . . I have a certain tendency to be a little theoretical when I begin work: I say what I mean a bit too clearly, rather like a lecturer, and it's extremely tedious. Little by little (and contact with the actors helps me enormously in this), I try to get closer to the way in which, in real life, people are able to incorporate their theories while still being subject to the thousand impedimenta of life, the thousand little events, the thousand little feelings that make it impossible to remain theoretical."

"Will you marry me, if Japan doesn't collapse?"

• •

The actors who collaborated with Renoir on "The Rules of the Game" were in most cases not his first choices for their roles. His original choice for La Chesnaye was the polished Claude Dauphin; the role finally went to Marcel Dalio, who had played Rosenthal, the urbane Jewish banker's son who escapes from the prisoner-of-war camp with Maréchal, the working-class Parisian played by Gabin, in "Grand Illusion." Dalio's warm and rather excitable manner transforms the character of the Marquis from a chilly, "theoretical" creation into a remarkably vivid and ambiguous presence on the screen. His Marquis is in many ways a hypocrite—an empty, superficial man—but he's also touching and likable, and his superb manners aren't entirely meaningless gestures; they're evidence of a sincere, if unfocussed, benevolence. Renoir wanted Gabin for André Jurieu, but he wound up with a young leading-man type named Roland Toutain, whose open, boyish features suggest—perhaps better than Gabin's would—the hero's profound unworldliness, his head-in-the-clouds romanticism. Christine was to have been played by Simone Simon, the femme fatale of "La Bête Humaine" (and later, appropriately, the heroine of Val Lewton and Jacques Tourneur's eerie "Cat People"). Renoir settled for Nora Grégor, an Austrian actress who happened to be an aristocrat—the Princess Starhemberg. She spoke very little French, and Renoir later expressed regret at having cast her, but the stiffness of her movements and the halting, uncertain quality of her line readings seem right for Christine, who is a true innocent—a woman whose emotional directness makes her an alien in the smoothly mendacious social world she inhabits. And Grégor's German accent provides a subtle link to another character whose sense of rectitude sets him apart—the grim-faced, upright Alsatian gamekeeper, Schumacher, who is married to the Marquise's flirtatious maid, Lisette. Schumacher is a conscientious servant and a firm believer in (and enforcer of) the rules of sport and marriage, but he's so rigid that virtually everyone—even the tolerant Marquis—finds him unendurable. The only person who shows any respect for him is Christine; she's also the only one who pronounces his name in the German, rather than the French, way. When Fernand Ledoux was unable to play the role, Renoir turned to the taller, much more severe-looking Gaston Modot, who makes the gamekeeper both pathetic and frightening. A "Rules of the Game" with Dauphin, Gabin, Simon, and Ledoux now seems unimaginable. It might have been just as great, but it wouldn't have been *this* film—the one we know, and whose vision is so consistent and so powerful that its every detail has retrospectively taken on the glow of inevitability.

The key role of Octave, the confidant, was no easier to cast. Originally, it was to have been played by Pierre Renoir, Jean's older brother—an accomplished actor, who had starred in three of Renoir's films ("La Nuit du Carrefour," "Madame Bovary," and "La Marseillaise"). When theatre commitments forced Pierre to drop out, Jean decided to take the role himself. Although he had played bit parts in some of his previous movies (and in each case had hammed it up energetically), he had never before given himself such an important role. His performance turned out to be one of the most controversial aspects of the film. A representative of Gaumont, which had agreed to distribute the film, was reported to be so unhappy with Renoir's playing of Octave that he prevailed on the director to cut some of his own

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scenes. (Renoir, ever adaptable, proposed replacing himself with Michel Simon and reshooting Octave's scenes, but the filming was too far along for that to be practical.) When the picture opened, the many critics who disliked it singled out Renoir's acting for particular scorn. The tendency since has been to ascribe perhaps too much significance to the director's presence in front of the camera, to assume that the role of Octave—a failed musician who never emerged from the shadow of the great conductor (Christine's father) who was his mentor and father figure —somehow had special meaning for Jean Renoir. But the father theme is a minor resonance at best—no more striking than dozens of others—and, in any event, Renoir's casting of himself as Octave was unplanned, just one of many accidents he took advantage of. (Besides, there is no evidence that Jean's relationship with his famous father was especially anguished; in his sixties, he wrote a wonderfully sane, perceptive book called "Renoir, My Father.") The real importance of Renoir's playing Octave in "The Rules of the Game" is that it puts him in the middle of things, right in there with his actor-collaborators. His character—rumpled, amiable, and unthreatening—is everyone's friend. He flirts with the women, jokes with the men, acts as go-between and peacemaker in volatile situations. Everybody trusts him; everybody seems to loosen up a little in his company. And he speaks the line that is probably the most succinct expression of the movie's spirit: "In this world there is one terrible thing, and that is that everyone has his reasons." It's a perfect role for Jean Renoir, and he throws himself into it happily, recklessly. He looks delighted, as if he were breaking down a barrier, knocking down walls.

In an interview with Truffaut and Rivette (in the fifties, when both were critics for *Cahiers du Cinéma*, and not yet filmmakers), Renoir gave a lovely metaphorical description of his working methods: "You walk in the country, you know that you're going to arrive at a certain spot near the path, and that there will be a meadow with poplars there; you see the meadow and the poplars, first in your imagination, then for real, you stop, you look; at first you see only a meadow and poplar trees; little by little, subtler emanations, tricks of light, certain contrasts, certain relationships appear, which are the essence of the landscape, much more important than the meadow and the poplars, but you can only see them after having seen the meadow and the poplars." This approach to artistic practice, based on intuition and a highly developed receptiveness to experience, served Renoir well throughout his career. It's what enabled him in "Grand Illusion" to aim for a simple antiwar message and the illustration of the democratic ideals of the leftist Popular Front, and to arrive at something far richer—a lucid and stirring dream of comradeship, heroism, and freedom. He had the rare gift of making ideals palpable, giving them flesh and texture; watching "Grand Illusion," with its abundance of exactly rendered physical details and vibrantly ambiguous human relationships, we actually believe, at least for the duration of the film, that this vision of courage and integrity and mutual tolerance corresponds to something real—that Renoir's camera has led us to an elusive place where the light hits the landscape just right and everything we didn't think existed is suddenly there before our eyes. In "The Rules of the Game" he takes himself, and us, even farther. After the classically precise exposition, the Marquis's guests begin arriving, in a driving rain, at La Colinière, and the emanations and tricks of light, the contrasts and relationships hit us almost faster than our eyes can register them: from here on, every moment is radiant. And, with Renoir shambling through the movie in the baggy disguise of Octave, it's as if he were looking at this landscape and finding, to his surprise, that he's in it, too—one of the poplars. What we're looking at in "The Rules of the Game" is the sum of Renoir's knowledge of the culture that produced him, seen from the outside and from the inside: the path and the meadow.

It seems a small thing, but the downpour that greets the guests at the château is somehow emblematic. In a sense, they're taking their places on the stage, assembling for the second act of a farce whose machinery is already humming with the assurance that its classical operations will be carried out smoothly, but their entrances are unexpectedly messy, disrupted, chaotic. It's at this point, perhaps, that we realize that Renoir's classicism isn't going to of the sort we're accustomed to. As uch as these European literary and eatrical traditions are in his bones, as uch as he loves the art that shaped m, this rain is in his bones, too: the mmon accidents of nature that foul the works—disturb the poise of ople striding confidently to their asgned spots, force them to hurry their ce, slip, stumble, mutter breathless anities, and forget the speeches ey've prepared—and that film alone n show us in the most essential, ysical way. This is not to say that enoir is doing anything as straightrward as setting up classical strucres in order to subvert them. Even in is scene of wet, flustered arrivals, der quickly reasserts itself. After reeting Jurieu, Christine commands eryone's attention with the anouncement "Dear friends, I must let u in on a little secret about my lationship with André Jurieu." Smilg warmly (if a bit self-consciously), e gives a short, elegantly phrased eech about her "small part in the ccess of his exploit." She says, "We pent many hours together—very leasant hours—hours passed under he sign of that rare thing friendship. Ie told me about his plans and I istened to him. . . . I'm very proud of t! And I felt the need to tell you about t now." It's quite a performance, and er listeners respond with bravos and ppreciative laughter, as if she were an ctress who had just carried off a paricularly tricky scene in a Molière play. ater, La Chesnaye thanks her: "It vas an unbearable test in which you cquitted yourself admirably. I must ompliment you on it." The inconveient emotions having been disposed of y Christine's tact and self-control, the guests—except for the disconsolate Jurieu—are free to go about the business of amusing themselves: they break into groups for cards and billiards, talk about the upcoming hunt, plan a fancy-dress celebration for the following week. "We'll put on a comedy!" La Chesnaye exclaims.

From here on, as the real comedy—Renoir's, not La Chesnaye's—plays itself out, the movie keeps veering, with thrilling abandon, between the poles of pure formality (social and aesthetic) and something wild and unpredictable: the ungovernable forces of love and nature. Renoir is trying not to undermine classicism but, in a way, to reinvent it—to explore whether it's

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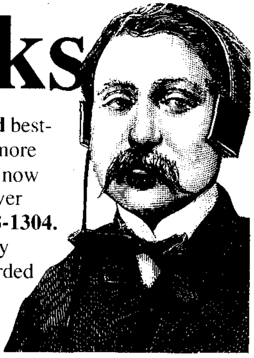

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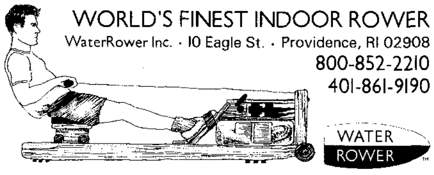

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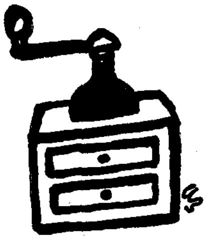
possible to retain its elegance, its grace, its serene rhythms while making full use of the riskier and less disciplined energy of film. In his book about his father he quotes these aphorisms from Auguste Renoir's notebooks:

> It is impossible to repeat in one period what was done in another. The point of view is not the same, any more than are the tools, the ideas, the needs or the painters' techniques.
>
> An artist, under pain of oblivion, must have confidence in himself, and listen only to his real master: Nature.
>
> The greatest enemy of the worker and the industrial artist is certainly the machine.
>
> There are people who imagine that one can re-do the Middle Ages and the Renaissance with impunity. One can only copy: that is the watchword. And after such folly has continued long enough, go back to the sources. You will see how far away we have got from them.
>
> Consider the great masters of the past. They were aware that there are two regularities: that of the eye and that of the compass. The great masters rejected the latter.

Jean Renoir interprets his father's remarks this way: "He was torn between two procedures: direct perception, on the one hand, and tradition, on the other; it was a question of method and not of principle." "The Rules of the Game" might almost have been designed to test the beliefs that Auguste Renoir passed on to his son. The whole import of this film, the great theme that emerges from the dazzling play of light on this landscape, is that the social and aesthetic forms of the past—the traditions that shaped Jean Renoir and his generation—have become mechanical, inhospitable to life. Their regularity is that of the compass, not the eye. The people gathered at La Colinière, all of whom Renoir loves even when they behave badly (perhaps because he makes so little distinction between the actors and the characters), are struggling inside various machines—structures that appear sometimes hostile to them, sometimes accommodating, but are in fact always fundamentally indifferent.



It's no accident that the Marquis has a passion for automatons. (They were all the rage in the eighteenth century, too.) His Paris apartment is filled with mechanical figurines: warbling birds, a musical doll in the form of a black girl. ("It's a little romantic Negress," La Chesnaye says delightedly. "The mechanism is perfect.") During the musical-comedy revue that the Marquis and his guests perform on the last night of their week-long houseparty, there's a remarkable shot of a player piano, its keys moving up and down by themselves in the darkened drawing room: it's playing Saint-Saëns' "Danse Macabre," and the camera pans to the stage, where, against a black background, figures in ghost costumes appear, followed by one in a skeleton suit, and begin to dance. This is one of the most astonishing shots in movie history, and Renoir tops it just a few seconds later with a long pan across the back of the room which catches various characters running off with other people's partners and hiding from their own as the eerie light flickers across the spectators' faces. (In one of the brief shots linking these two virtuoso camera movements, we see an ornate mirror, and for an instant we find among the guests the reflection of the ghosts and the skeleton dancing on the stage.) Soon afterward, La Chesnaye, who has been dashing madly around the château looking for Christine, appears onstage to present the climax of the evening's entertainment—"the culmination," he says, "of my career as a collector of musical and mechanical instruments." The curtain opens to reveal a gigantic mechanical organ, called a *limonaire;* it's a ridiculous-looking contraption, decorated with elaborately kitschy paintings and carvings and, in the center, three little statues of boys. As the organ begins to play (a jangling, monotonous rendition of a melody from "Die Fledermaus"), the camera pans again, discovering, in closeup, first one mechanical boy, striking a bell, then a second, beating time, then the last, striking another bell, and, finally, La Chesnaye, in his dinner jacket, nervously dividing his attention between his great acquisition and the audience he so desperately wants to please.

In a 1966 television program, Renoir and Dalio, two old men sitting on the steps of the Château de la Ferté-Saint-Aubin, reminisce about the making of "The Rules of the Game." Renoir says of the character of the Marquis, "We discovered it as we went along. What excited me about that story, and excites me still in my memory of it, is that we produced your character and the whole story of the film—since it revolves around your character—as we went along; we didn't follow a plan or a map. You see what I think is deadliest in our times is the plan, the architect's blueprint. . . The Marquis de la Chesnaye wasn't produced by the work of engineers, it was produced by memories; I have known many Marquis de la Chesnaye." Then Renoir reminds Dalio of the pan across the *limonaire*, and the actor recalls how much trouble he had playing that scene, how many takes he needed to get the Marquis's expression just right. Renoir cuts him off: "But what a shot! I think it's the best shot I did in my life. Oh, it's fantastic! The mixture of humility and pride, of success and doubt. Nothing definite—on the margin of many things." The director's enthusiasm is charming, and so is his graciousness in attributing the greatness of the shot to Dalio's performance, and not to his own conception, his own plan. "At first, I had the wrong idea," he says. "I thought it could be an improvised shot. But it couldn't be; it had to be worked at, in shooting and reshooting." What Renoir seems to have discovered in the course of making the shot he considered the best of his career are the things he spent his life discovering and rediscovering, in shot after shot and film after film: that nothing is, or should be, predictable; that you have to attend always to what is actually before your eyes, and be willing to discard any notions you elaborated in advance; and that in movies (and elsewhere) repetition is sometimes the only route to the unexpected, the unforeseeable.

The shot that Renoir and Dalio remember so vividly almost thirty years later is one of those startling moments in which the essence of the landscape is revealed: both the film's meanings and its processes are abruptly flooded with light. The idea of the shot couldn't be clearer: that there's a fundamental connection between the Marquis and the silly little figures on the *limonaire*—that he is, like them, in some sense an automaton, a parody of something, a copy, a triumphantly useless product of engineering. Even if all we took from the scene were this satiric point, that would still be quite a bit. It might help us to understand, for instance, why the first shot of "The Rules of the Game" is of a radio sound engineer surrounded

his equipment; the camera escapes
om this maze of machinery by fol-
wing the path of a cable to its end, a
icrophone in the hands of the an-
ouncer reporting Jurieu's historic
nding at Le Bourget. And why the
cond shot is of the airplane—why our
st look at the hero is this image of a
ny, fragile machine approaching from
distance. We may understand, too,
e full significance of Jurieu's re-
ealing his most intimate feelings to
e reporter's inert, indifferent micro-
one, and of Christine's learning of
is love for her by listening to his faint,
atic-distorted voice on the radio. And
e may begin to recognize—if we
aven't done so already—the extraor-
inary intricacy of the film's meta-
hors. The Marquis's mechanical
reatures, Jurieu's flying machine, the
irds and rabbits that are hunted for
ort, the servants who go through
eir paces so that their masters' lives
an run like clockwork are all varia-
ons on a single, infinitely complex
heme: the relationship between culture
nd nature, between the arts we've
cquired and the world that makes
port of our proud inventions. All these
etaphors and suggestions are present
n the design of the *limonaire* shot, in
he idea of it—and for that reason
hey're not enough for Renoir. He
wouldn't settle for what planning, even
t its most inspired, could give him. He
ept exploring, in take after take, until
is actor at last came through with that
miraculous expression: a look that, in its
human complexity, transcends the satir-
ic content of the scene—that smudges
the blueprint's elegant lines and some-
how makes them more beautiful.

THE genius of Renoir is that, like so many of his characters, he has two loves: to him reality and artifice are equally irresistible. He embraces his own contradictions; they put him where he wants to be, on the margin of many things. Late in his life, he often sounded as if he dogmatically loathed anything artificial or mechanical. In an interview published in 1959, the year of the restoration of "The Rules of the Game" (it was also the year in which he made "The Testament of Dr. Cordelier" and "Picnic on the Grass," both of which are rather single-minded attacks on modern science), he said, "All technical refinements depress me. The perfection of photography, the big screens, the stereo sound, all of it makes possible a servile reproduction of nature; and that reproduction bores me. What interests me is the interpretation an artist makes of life. The artist's personality interests me more than the copying of an object." Like his father, Renoir has nothing but contempt for the notion that nature could, or should, be copied; the object will always be finer and more mysterious than its reproduction. But he isn't—or, in any event, wasn't at the time of "The Rules of the Game"—a pure Luddite, an unthinking enemy of technology. Although his work as a filmmaker began in the silent era, he welcomed sound, and made more imaginative use of it than anyone else in the thirties; he worked brilliantly with the improved lenses that allowed greater depth of focus; and he didn't resist color, either. (At one point, he considered shooting "The Rules of the Game" in color.) In his autobiography, which appeared in 1974, he makes the surprising statement that he has become "a worshipper of the artificial." What he hates isn't so much the machine itself as the attitude it engenders—the feeling that nature can be trapped, conquered, brought under our control by technical ingenuity. Everything that the characters possess in "The Rules of the Game" and all the activities they undertake have been engineered to keep the real world, and their own natures, at a distance. Everything that Renoir does in this picture—with the camera, with the actors, and in his own performance—is designed to reduce that distance.

The subtlety of his means of closing the gaps—between culture and nature, between what we've mastered and what we never will, between the reassuring past and the elusive, confounding present—is nowhere clearer than in the famous sequence of the hunt, which is in every sense the film's centerpiece. It depicts a traditional pastime of the class Renoir is examining ("a sport which I detest . . . an abominable exercise in cruelty," he once wrote), and it's also, in technical terms, the sequence in the film which is most closely linked to the silent-movie aesthetic of montage. Elsewhere in "The Rules of the Game" Renoir films the action with very long takes, lots of camera movement, and extremely deep focus; he cuts only when he has to. André Bazin, who understood Renoir better than anyone else, wrote that the director "forced himself to look back beyond the re-

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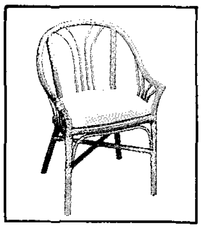

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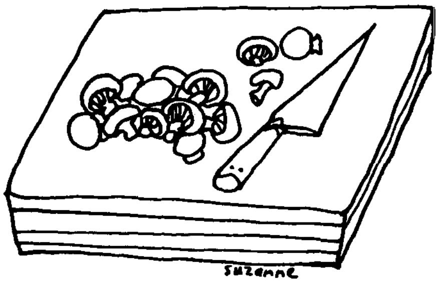
sources provided by montage and so uncovered the secret of a film form that would permit everything to be said without chopping the world up into little fragments, that would reveal the hidden meanings in people and things without disturbing the unity natural to them." But while the rabbits and birds are being slaughtered the shots are brief and the editing is fast. (In the three-and-a-half-minute sequence in which the animals are killed, there are fifty separate shots, out of only three hundred and thirty-seven in the entire film.) This scene represents a conscious break in the movie's easy, flowing rhythm, and it occurs at virtually the midpoint of the narrative: we experience it viscerally as something jarring, unnatural—the intrusion of a kind of technical artifice our senses told us had been abandoned. And the scene is overwhelming. The killing seems interminable, as if time had halted in its tracks, and the uncharacteristic abruptness of the cutting expresses precisely the essence of our sense of violation. Many of the shots are in fact truncated examples of the fluid camera style we see elsewhere in the movie. The camera gets a rabbit in its sights and tries to follow it as it runs, panicked, from the beaters and the hunters, and after a few, blurry seconds we hear the report of a rifle and everything stops: the brief exhilaration of high-speed movement is arrested with terrible suddenness and finality, the moving camera pulls up like a dog jerked back by its leash, and the shot has, within a sickeningly short time, become what it never meant to be—a fixed, stunned closeup of a lifeless object.

It's as if Renoir, having set himself the task of recording this time-honored ritual in which the upper classes express their power over the natural world, found himself forced into a style at odds with his own nature. For three and a half frantic minutes, he is trapped in the stern mechanism of classic montage and can't escape: no matter how fast he moves, every shot seems to end with something dead, and he has to keep cutting. The reason the sequence is so wrenching is that Renoir makes us feel the frenzy of his struggle not to give in to this imposed rhythm. The last rabbit the camera follows is, like the others, brought up short by a burst of gunfire, but, since there are no further sounds of shooting, Renoir allows himself to linger on the image of the dead animal, to show us that it continues to twitch, weakly, for a few seconds—a mysterious persistence of the nerves and the muscles, a reminder of the stubborn need of living things to remain in motion.

In those three or four extra seconds, the movie begins to breathe again, to recover—with tremendous relief—the natural rhythm of its unique sense of life. The sequence isn't over yet, and the longer, more flowing takes that follow fill us with a kind of melancholy joy. After the spectacle of organized destruction—sanctioned by tradition and not questioned by those who participate in it—Renoir's openness and ease seem even more precious. The stakes have been raised: the tension between the old forms inherited by the people of Renoir's time and the new forms he is trying to discover in his filmmaking has become something far more fundamental and more passionate than a theoretical opposition. The textures of the vast gray sky and the slender trees, the glimpse of a bird in flight, the way the actors move, and the way the camera moves with them all seem to matter more than they did before.

It's at this point, as the servants retrieve the carcasses, and the characters search for each other and begin to resume their normal social intercourse, that the mechanism of the farce starts to break down, that the warps in the classical structure of the comedy are unmistakably exposed. Here, in the open air of the estate, Christine discovers her husband's infidelity. As La Chesnaye and his mistress, together on the bank of a marsh, discuss his decision to end their affair, Christine, far away, is amusing herself with a small telescope that one of the guests has lent her. Through it she first watches a squirrel in a tree: "I can see it as though I could touch it!" she exclaims (as the camera holds the animal in a closeup that, disconcertingly, recalls to us our vision of the dying rabbit). The owner of the telescope boasts that the instrument allows its user to share the an mal's "intimate life." It allows tl Marquise, a few moments later, unexpected view of the intimate life her husband, who is saying farewell his mistress with an especially war embrace. (And, while Christine watcl es, Renoir, as Octave, is at her sid pestering her to let him see what she looking at.)



In the heady aftermath of the sho —that graphic display of her class illusion that it has mastered the worl —Christine, by chance, has a glimps of something real: evidence that h husband's beautiful manners, his exquisitely correct behavior don't te quite the whole story of his nature. An the recognition of this bit of dirt insid her smooth-running life is enough t send her spinning out of control. Sh becomes volatile, erratic, as if her internal compass had gone haywire. O the last night of the party—the nigh of the amateur theatrics and the unveiling of the *limonaire*—she whirl through La Colinière in a kind c moral panic, disrupting everyone else' plans and expectations as she gives i to a series of capricious attractions looking frantically for the one that wil stabilize her again. She allows hersel to be carried off by one of the guests, rather oily Casanova named Saint-Aubin; then she begs Jurieu to tak her away from her husband; then sh falls, awkwardly, into the arms o Octave (who eventually gives her back to Jurieu). The men, including La Chesnaye, chase her, plead with her, fight over her, lose her, run after her again, while the camera, serenely intoxicated with its freedom in the midst of this havoc, moves gracefully through the rooms and hallways of the château and, finally, outside, missing nothing, although everything is happening at once. In a sense, all this activity is just the playing out of the classic door-slamming farce that was set up so expertly in the film's first third. The difference is that in Renoir's world the doors are all wide open, and remain that way. There's no place for anyone to hide: we catch sight of the characters through receding doorways, and they're in focus even when they're far in the background.

And while Christine's unpredictability is forcing everyone around her into frenzied motion her counterpart, Schumacher, is also on a rampage: waving a handgun, the gamekeeper is alking a servant named Marceau (a rmer poacher, whom the Marquis has cently put on the domestic staff), cause he has been flirting with Li- tte. This slapstick chase starts in the itchen but quickly spills over into the oms where the Marquis's guests are njoying their civilized amusements. In e drawing room, where the guests are y now playing cards, Schumacher fires t Marceau (marvellously played by ulien Carette, whose movements are s nimble as a rabbit's). After the initial ock, the ladies and gentlemen decide at this ludicrous melodrama must be art of the evening's entertainment, a it of theatre arranged by their charm- g and ingenious host. At the height f the chaos, La Chesnaye orders his utler, Corneille, to "put a stop to his comedy," and Corneille replies, 'Which one, Monsieur le Marquis?" o one can quite accept that all the vening's fierce emotions are real: La hesnaye, who has been screaming and ailing about and throwing punches at urieu, ruefully compares the drama he as been taking part in with something e might read in the papers about "an talian laborer" who "tried to carry off he wife of a Polish worker and . . . it inished up with a stabbing." He says, 'I didn't believe such things possible." These lower-order emotions not only re possible but are capable of fouling up even the most precisely regulated mechanisms: in the midst of the shooting and carrying on, the Marquis's *limonaire* has gone berserk, its monotonous tune transformed into a horrible, dissonant clanging of parts.

The harmonies of the characters' lives have dissolved in cacophony, yet we watch and listen to the resolution of this tragic farce with a strange sense of calm, as if—like the bum, at the end of "Boudu Saved from Drowning," who allows the Seine to carry him away from the respectable bourgeois world—we were abandoning ourselves to a sudden, strong current, forgetting everything in the euphoria of headlong motion. The rhythm that Renoir discovers in the hectic final act of "The Rules of the Game" isn't exhausting; it's varied, virtuosic—as light and as inexplicably moving as a great piece of chamber music. Among all the wild, hilarious scenes of servants in uniform dashing about maniacally and trying to keep their footing on the superbly polished floors, and of the upper classes, in formal dress or still in their music-hall costumes, bellowing and taking inept swings at each other, there are a number of slow, contemplative passages in which one character finds himself or herself alone with another, away from the rest. Jurieu and La Chesnaye apologize to each other; Schumacher and Marceau console each other for the loss of their jobs; Christine and Octave reminisce about her father, the famous conductor—Octave standing on the steps of the château, facing the house in which the chaos is still going on, and raising his arms as if to begin conducting, then stopping, defeated. (This scene was among those eliminated before the film's première.) Octave, the genial failure, seems to know what the man who plays him knows: that his gestures are worthless if they're only imitation, only a repetition of something learned long ago. At the moment when his arms freeze in the air, Renoir looks as if he were hearing the voice of his father: "Go back to the sources. You will see how far away we have got from them."

THE gestures of Jean Renoir the filmmaker, conducting his ensemble of actors and technicians, are never arrested in this way. Every movement he makes, every direction he gives seems to produce a pure, clear tone—something we have never heard before and yet recognize immediately. His subject is how far we've gone from our sources while clinging to their forms. The miraculous paradox of "The Rules of the Game" is that Renoir, while examining the distance between the powerful emotions of these cultured Europeans and the feeble, tinny expressive means at their disposal, has somehow managed to reanimate the classical spirit—to make the music of reason seem once again the music of the heart. And we feel, throughout, that what he has done wouldn't have been possible in any medium but film—that his rediscovery of the sources of his culture is in some sense a consequence of his exploration of the resources of this still young art. Renoir often expressed his admiration for the cinema's pioneers, the inventors and improvisers—those who used the art, unself-consciously, as a thrilling new form of play, a game whose rules you could make up as you went along. He was especially awed by Mack Sennett, who, he said, would gather his company around him every day and say to

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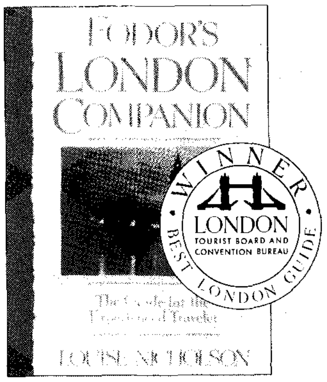

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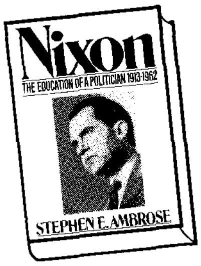

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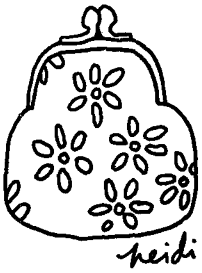
them, "What are we going to do this morning?" Renoir wrote in his autobiography, "The earliest films were the direct expression of the dreams of the filmmaker and bore his unmistakable signature, together with all the influences that had combined to shape him." Renoir carried a much heavier load of influences—he could hardly have willed himself to be a primitive artist, to undo the tradition and history that shaped him—but he was able to express himself, in all his complexity, on film as directly and unmistakably as his distant predecessors had done. The cinema, not burdened with much of a past, was the ideal field for him to play in, and the joy of playing is in large part what "The Rules of the Game" is about. The French title is richer, more apt, and more ambiguous, since *jeu* means more than a game: it can also refer to the playing of music, and to acting, the playing of scenes—that is, to the varieties of play that Renoir loves the most.



In "The Rules of the Game" Renoir, working equally out of his own memories and out of what must have seemed the infinite possibilities of film, discovers a classicism that isn't confining or mechanical. We can be open to anything, as mobile and receptive as the eye of the camera, the movie says, and yet remain lucid. The sadness that overtakes us at the end of the film comes from the recognition that its attractive, sympathetic characters are playing their lives very poorly—by rote or not at all. The ones who can't seem to manage with any kind of skill, like Jurieu, pay the heaviest price: trying to escape with Christine, in the darkness outside the château, he's shot and killed by Schumacher. (The inept gamekeeper thinks that Christine, who's wearing Lisette's hooded cape, is his wife, and that Jurieu is Octave.) On the run, the victim crumples with shocking suddenness, in a plain, startled medium shot: as Marceau reports, "he rolled over like an animal." The fatal accident is absurd, and a violation of the rules of farce, yet it feels inevitable—the ultimate expression of a world in which no one sees anything for what it is. As people gather on the steps of the château, everyone looks lost, shattered, confused, few of them knowing what has happened and none of them knowing why. For the last time, the Marquis, standing at the top of the steps (at the spot where Octave attempted to conduct the phantom orchestra), marshals his considerable skills to carry off a difficult moment. Having instructed the butler to "deal with the formalities," La Chesnaye, hollow-eyed and weary, tells the guests that the gamekeeper "thought he saw a poacher, and fired, since that is his duty," and briefly eulogizes the dead aviator.

As in the *limonaire* shot, the actor's expression is on the margin of many things, now showing sadness and relief at once, along with a desperate emptiness. We can't look at him without recalling that earlier shot: the image that revealed this elegant man as a fidgety, helpless mechanical doll is lodged in our minds, and its memory complicates our reactions to the Marquis's glib performance on the steps. We can't condemn him, somehow, for the ease with which he lies. For the Marquis and his kind the denial of reality is simply a reflex, a tic, no more willed than the ghostly twitching of an animal that has been shot—movement that once gave evidence of the presence of life but now signifies nothing at all. And Dalio's playing has a sorrowful eloquence: his deadened eyes and his limply graceful gestures are a terrifying, melancholy image of an exhausted spirit. He's like a puppet wearing out from the strain of repetition: he has been required to perform his limited repertoire of moves too many times.

As the Marquis finishes his speech—having discharged his duty of providing the assembled guests with the illusion of closure, the comfort of resolution—we begin to hear music, a melody resonant with the exalting clarity of the eighteenth century. It's from "Le Déserteur," an opera by Monsigny, and it's incomprehensibly moving: how is it possible for something so precise, so deftly measured, to stir us so profoundly? Its formal beauty seems to come from somewhere deep in our memories, as if everything that came before us, and made us, were present again in the most immediate way. We can almost believe that sounds like these are capable of reanimating parts of our imaginations we've never known how to use, of restoring power to rooms that were closed up before we we born. In "The Rules of the Game Renoir makes the world look large less constricting, with more space t live and play in. The final image inseparable from the music that accompanies it, just as the film is inseparabl from the music that inspired it: a statel procession of trembling shadows move across the walls of La Colinière as th characters go back inside. Like so man other moments in this film, the imag is simple yet fathomlessly suggestive filling our minds with echoes and ideas It tells us most obviously that the worl these people live in is spectral, bodiless vanishing before our eyes in an involuntary danse macabre. But the shee loveliness of the image and its unearthly serenity are difficult to account for We feel in it, perhaps, some of Renoir' sadness at the end of play: his reluctance to leave the world he has bee immersed in; his knowledge that th people and things he has lived wit have now become, irrevocably, shadows on a screen. The movement of th dark forms has a dreamlike, reflectiv rhythm, the deliberate pace of memories drifting behind closed eyes. It's a if in becoming shadows the Marqui and his guests and his servants had achieved the dignity, the true grace that their worldly manners could only imitate. The distance between what these people could be and what they allow themselves to be is heartbreaking, but they have at least served as the instruments for measuring that distance, for enabling us to see ourselves more clearly, and Renoir, in this last shot, pays them homage for their service. As their shadows file across the screen, returning home, they merge, somehow, with all the spirits that "The Rules of the Game" has summoned up—Baroque composers, classical dramatists, the artist's father—and with the members of the audience rising from their seats to leave the theatre, carrying these images now as part of themselves. The shadows are everything that Jean Renoir found in himself and exposed to light.

—TERRENCE RAFFERTY

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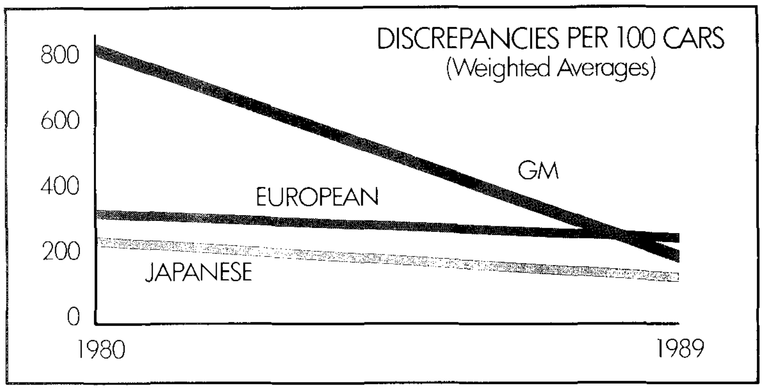

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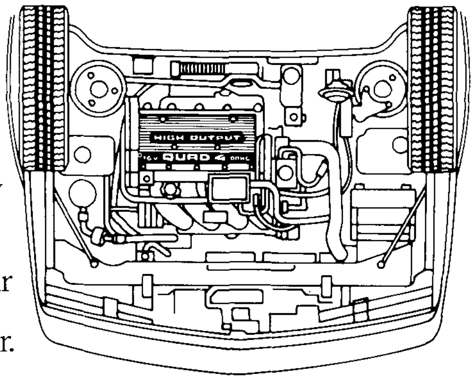

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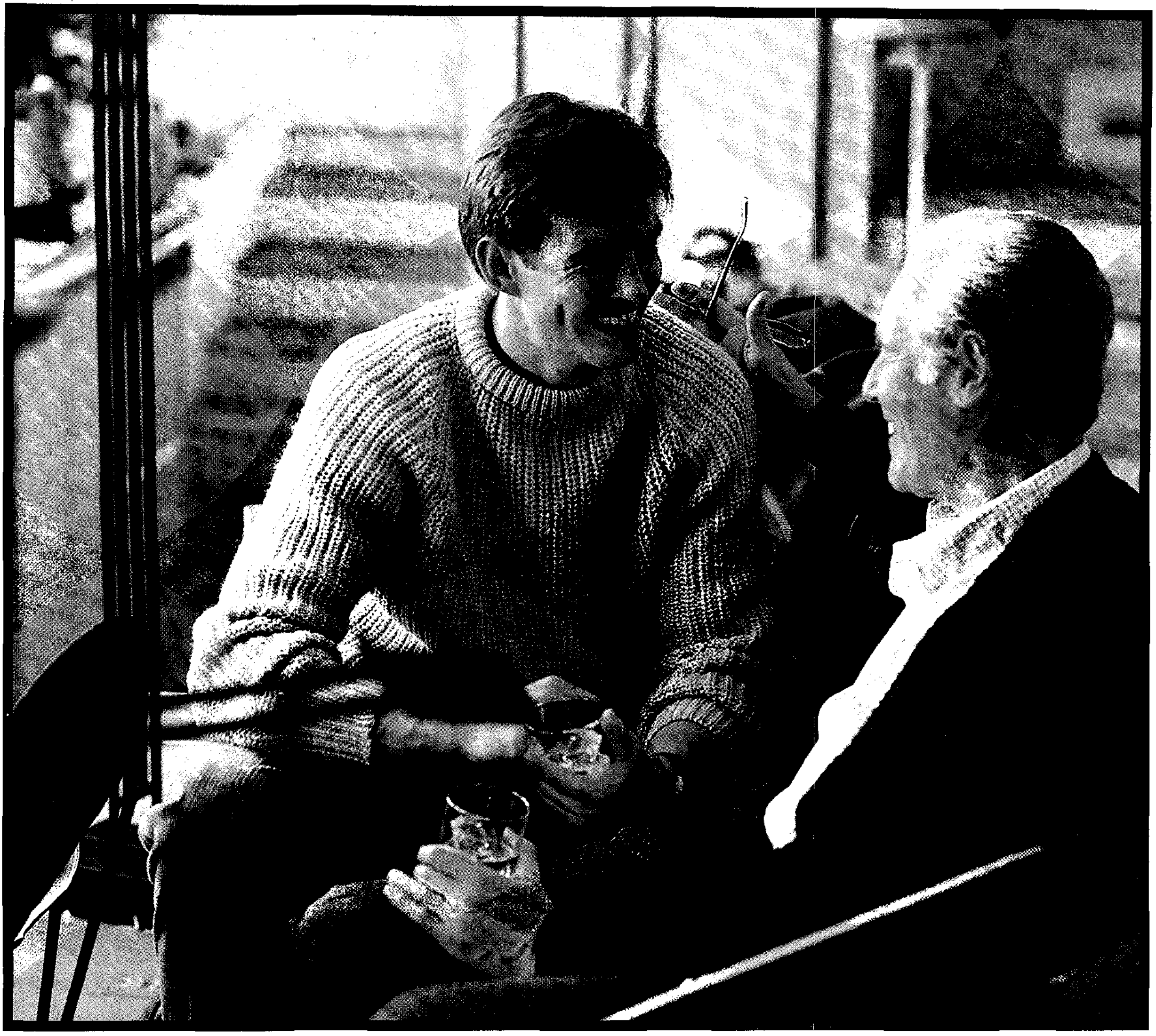

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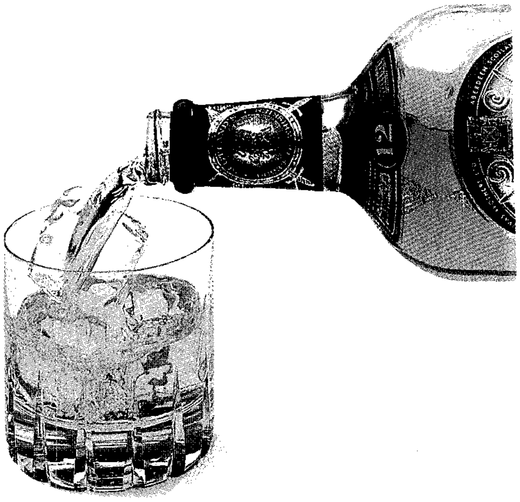

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